

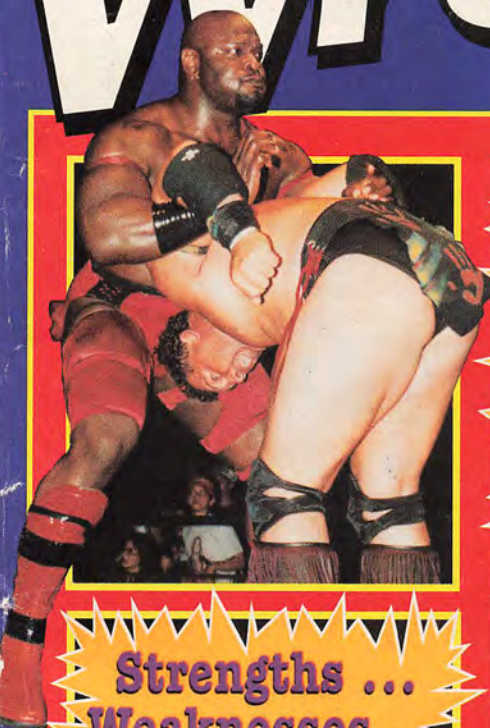
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Wrestling

YEARBOOK



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REPORTS**



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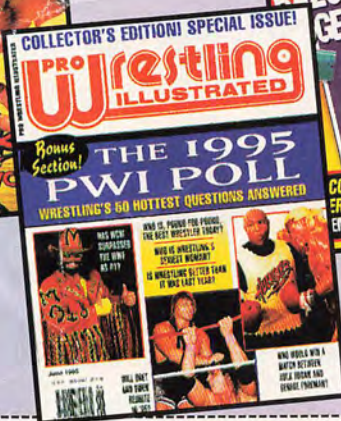
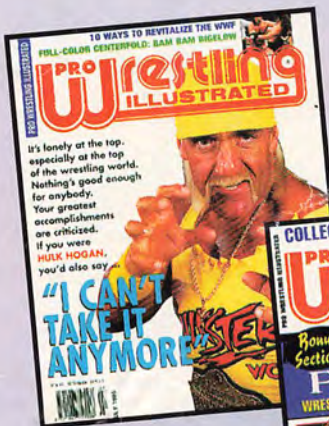
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SCOUTING REPORTS/CARICATURES

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 6 THE UNDERTAKER | 70 STING |
| 8 RICK & SCOTT STEINER | 72 AHMED JOHNSON |
| 10 SABU | 74 THE FOUR HORSEMEN |
| 12 GOLDUST | 76 BIG VAN VADER |
| 14 HULK HOGAN | 78 REY MISTERIO JR. |
| 16 SHAWN MICHAELS | 80 DAVEY BOY SMITH |
| 18 JEFF JARRETT | 82 SCOTT HALL |
| 20 THE GIANT | 84 MANKIND |
| 22 SUNNY & THE SMOKIN' GUNNS | 86 RANDY SAVAGE |
| 24 LEX LUGER | 88 THE SANDMAN & MISSY HYATT |
| 26 STEVE AUSTIN | 90 SAVIO VEGA |
| 28 KEVIN NASH | 92 JERRY LAWLER |
| 30 THE ULTIMATE WARRIOR | 94 THE GREAT MUTA |
| 32 HARLEM HEAT | 96 YOKOZUNA |
| 68 SHANE DOUGLAS | |



PAGE 88



COVER PHOTOS:

The Giant-Greg Valentine by Bill Apter
Shawn Michaels by Gary Dineen/Winning Image
Ahmed Johnson-Tatanka by Timothy A. Walker
Hulk Hogan by Bill Apter
Sunny by Jason Ross Lavin
Sting-Ric Flair by Bill Apter

PINUPS

- | | |
|---|--|
| 35 THE UNDERTAKER vs. SHAWN MICHAELS | 51 SABU vs. TABLE |
| 36 RIC FLAIR | 52 CHRIS BENOIT |
| 37 JAKE ROBERTS vs OWEN HART | 53 GOLDUST vs. SAVIO VEGA |
| 38 MARC MERO & SABLE | 54 BIG VAN VADER |
| 39 LEX LUGER vs. ARN ANDERSON | 55 "PSYCHO" SID VICIOUS vs. BRIAN CHRISTOPHER |
| 40 BRIAN CHRISTOPHER | 56 KONNAN |
| 41 SKIP vs. THE INFERNO KID | 57 SHANE DOUGLAS vs. MIKEY WHIPWRECK |
| 42 DAN SEVERN | 58 KEVIN NASH |
| 43 REY MISTERIO JR. vs. MIKEY WHIPWRECK | 59 SHAWN MICHAELS vs. BUDDY LANDELL |
| 44 AHMED JOHNSON | 60 BRIAN PILLMAN |
| 45 TOMMY DREAMER vs. RAVEN | 61 RICK & SCOTT STEINER vs. DANCES WITH DUDLEY |
| 46 HARLEM HEAT | 62 STING |
| 47 DAVEY BOY SMITH vs. BRET HART | 63 JEFF JARRETT vs. GYPSY JOE |
| 48 MISS TEXAS | 64 SAVIO VEGA |
| 49 STING vs. THE GIANT | 65 SCOTT HALL vs. JERRY LAWLER |
| 50 SUNNY | 66 HULK HOGAN |

Welcome To

INSIDE WRESTLING PRESENTS:

WRESTLING YEARBOOK!

YOU ASKED FOR it and you got it! We take the time to read all the letters you send us in care of our various wrestling publications, and one comment we get all the time is that you can never get enough color pinups. Well, in this WRESTLING YEARBOOK, you'll find plenty of those! Thirty-two to be exact. Beautiful posed pictures and

some dazzling action shots, all of which would look great on your wall.

But there's more to this issue of INSIDE WRESTLING PRESENTS than spectacular pinups. We also have for you 29 of the craziest caricatures you've ever seen. You'll see some of your favorite wrestlers, valets, and managers as you've never seen them before.

We commissioned Jason Conlan, an artist who makes his home in Australia, to do the caricatures, and if you flip through this magazine, you'll see what a terrific job he did.

And that's *still* not all. To go along with each one of Jason's caricatures, we have given you a detailed scouting report of the wrestler or wrestlers in question. Keep in mind that in the "Monthly

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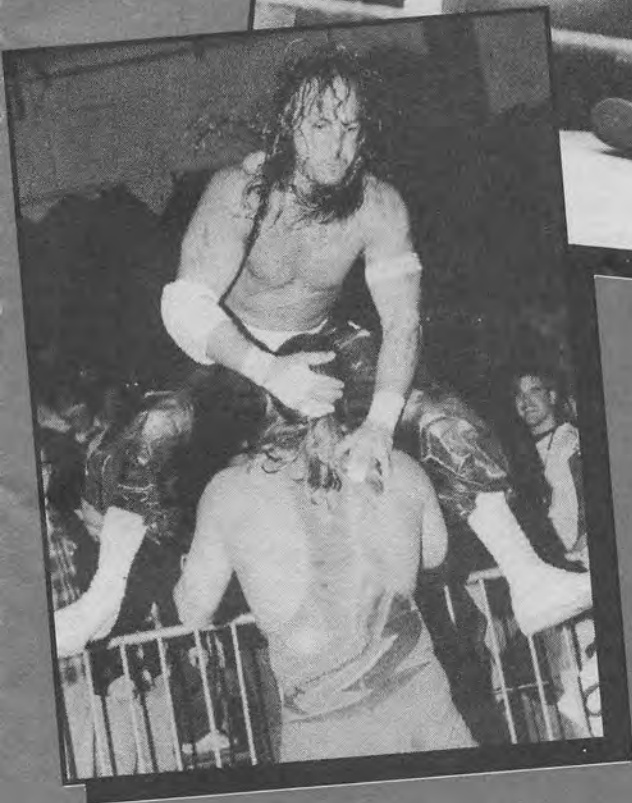
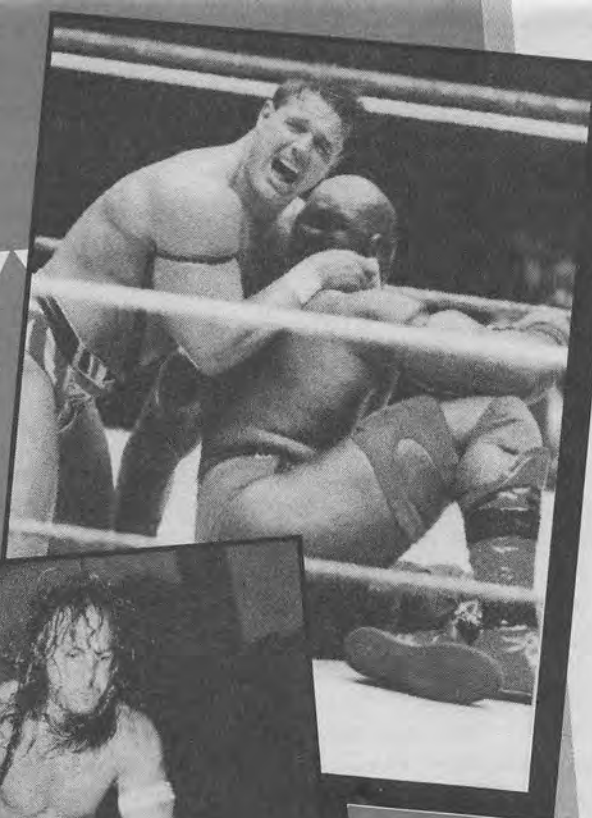
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Ratings For 1996" portion of the scouting reports, the ratings are taken from issues of INSIDE WRESTLING for each month of this year. However, since there are no independent ratings in INSIDE WRESTLING, we took ratings for all wrestlers who didn't wrestle in either the WWF or WCW for a good portion of 1996 (Sabu, Shane Douglas, Rey Misterio Jr., Mankind,

The Sandman, and The Great Muta) from *The Wrestler*.

What more could you ask for in a special magazine like this?!

If you have any comments on this WRESTLING YEARBOOK, we'd be very interested to hear from you. Write to us at: WRESTLING YEARBOOK, Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034.

The Editors

SCOUTING REPORT:

THE UNDERTAKER



MONTHLY RATING: Not rated (January); No. 5 WWF (February); No. 4 WWF, No. 3 overall (March); No. 4 WWF, No. 5 overall (April); No. 4 WWF, No. 7 overall (May); No. 4 WWF, No. 3 overall (June); No. 4 WWF, No. 3 overall (July); No. 4 WWF, No. 5 overall (August); No. 5 WWF, No. 11 overall (September); No. 8 WWF (October); No. 7 WWF, No. 9 overall (November); No. 4 WWF, No. 8 overall (December)

RECORD IN PAY-PER-VIEWS: Singles: 11-4

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Perhaps no man in wrestling history has won more matches in the first six minutes than The Undertaker. On the other hand, he has gone the distance against some of the finest wrestlers in the world and once beat Bret

Hart in 28 minutes. Because he moves so little, The Undertaker doesn't get tired, and Paul Bearer's urn supplies him with whatever inspiration or energy he needs.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: The Undertaker is a donut wrestler. He has no middle and often gets dominated between seven and 14 minutes.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE: Anybody who fears death. The Undertaker is very serious and very intimidating. His hands are cold and clammy, as if he's actually dead. Big men Yokozuna and Kamala fell prey to The Undertaker because they were paralyzed with fear.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE: Confident wrestlers such as Bret Hart ... men who can't be intimidated. He also tends to struggle against quick, agile opponents.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: The clothesline. Although he's big, The Undertaker doesn't have a strong neck and is frequently felled by this move.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: Speed. The Undertaker is so slow and methodical that his opponents never get worn down. Long

Undertaker matches aren't marathons; they're more like chess matches.

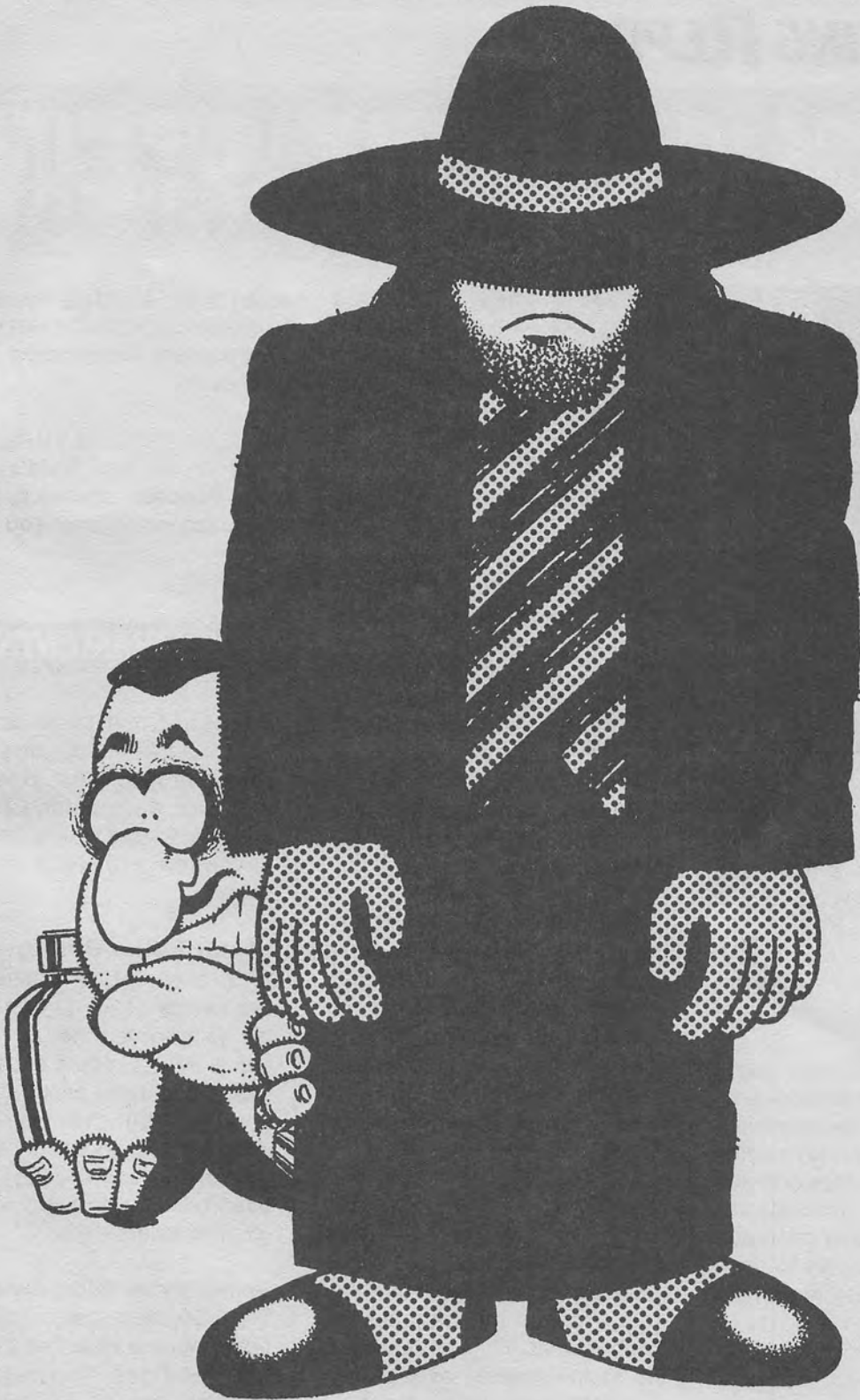
WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: "Tombstone" piledriver. The Undertaker puts all the forces of nature behind his "tombstone" to deliver a blow from which no wrestler has ever immediately recovered.

OUR COMMENTS:

Senior Editor Bill Apter: "The big question is, can The Undertaker thrive without Paul Bearer at his side? I've heard they're on the verge of a split. Who's going to hold on to the urn? I'm interested in seeing what the power of The Undertaker is really like."

Editor-in-Chief Dave Lenker: "Watching The Undertaker wrestle is always so interesting. He never seems worried. The one glaring weakness I see is that his attack is very predictable."

Managing Editor Brandi Mankiewicz: "I wonder how much longer The Undertaker will be effective. He willingly takes so much punishment in almost every match. He has to be wearing down."



The Undertaker

SCOUTING REPORT:

RICK & SCOTT STEINER



MONTHLY RATINGS FOR 1996: Not rated (January-July); No. 6 (July, August); No. 4 (September); No. 3 (October); No. 4 (November); No. 3 (December)

RECORD IN PAY-PER-VIEWS:
Tag teams: 10-3-1

STRONGEST PART OF THEIR MATCHES: The Steiners are such fast starters that sometimes it seems as if they have something better to do. Rick and Scott like to come out storming and keep their opponents off-balance and have been known to go for the finish in the first three minutes of matches, even against top opponents.

WEAKEST PART OF THEIR MATCHES: The Steiners wrestle in three stages, starting fast, slowing down in the middle, and then turning up the intensity once the match hits double-digits.

They have fared well in "Iron Man" competitions, but they are most vulnerable in the 9-to-14-minute range.

WHO THEY WANT TO FACE: The best bring out the best in Rick and Scott Steiner, who only seem interested when the team on the other side of the ring is one of the elite. The Road

Warriors, Harlem Heat, The Four Horsemen ... the Steiners have an incredible record against these superstars.

WHO THEY DON'T WANT TO FACE: Big, overweight brawlers. Scott's suplexes are ineffective against much bigger men, and Rick has an impossible time bowling them over. It's amazing that the least-talented teams have given the Steiners some trouble.

MOVE THEY'RE MOST VULNERABLE TO: Both Steiners wrestle with injuries, and opponents can be effective if they are able to focus their attacks on those injuries. Overall, however, the Steiners have never proven susceptible to classic finishing maneuvers. When they're beaten, they're usually outbrawled.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO THEIR REPERTOIRE, IT

WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: A double-dropkick. It's the last thing any opponent would expect from the Steiners.

WHEN WRESTLING THEM, BE SURE TO AVOID: Scott's suplexes. Seconds afterward, Rick likes to tag in and finish you off.

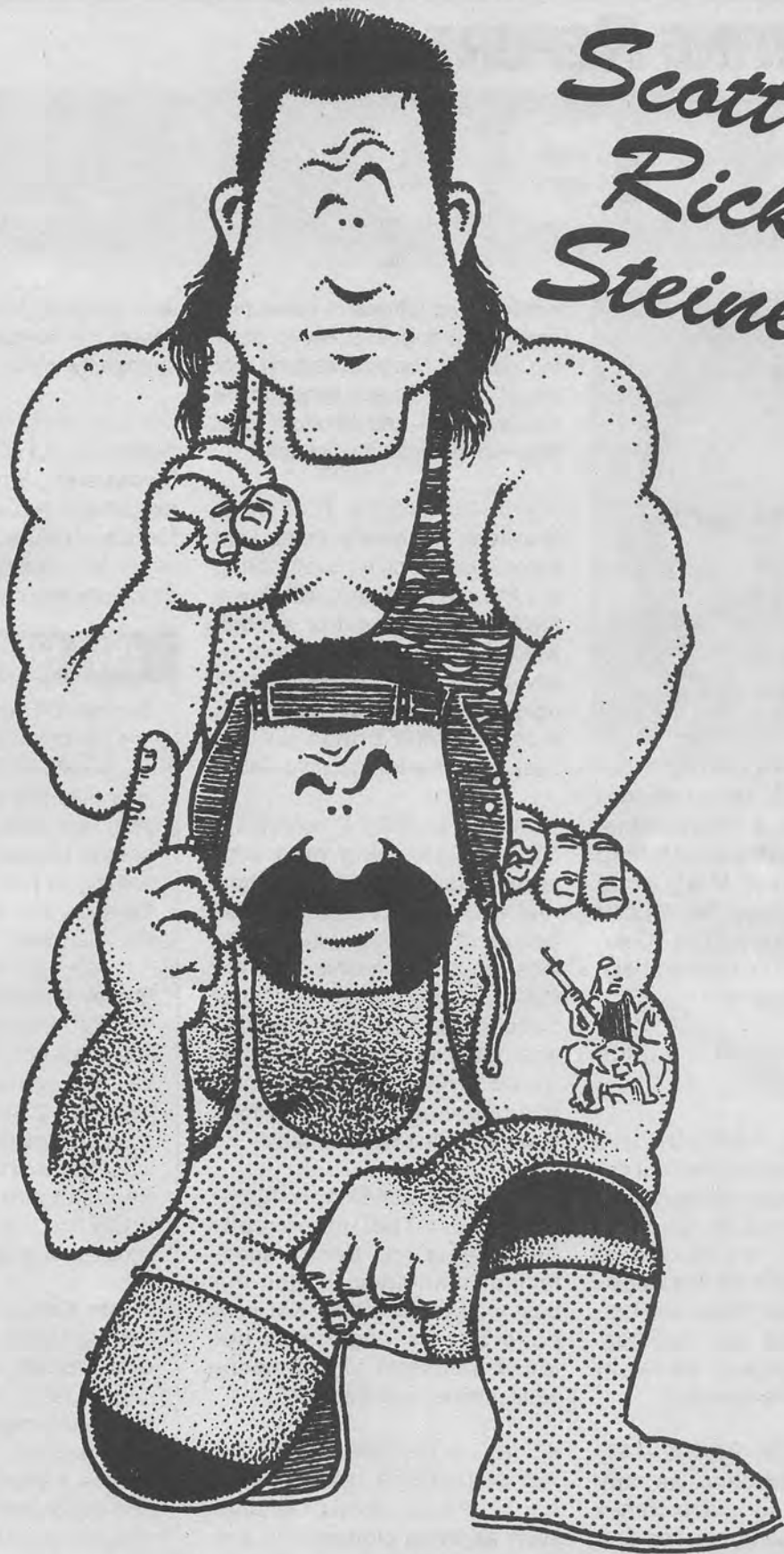
OUR COMMENTS:

Editor-in-Chief Dave Lenker: "Until the Steiners came along, The Road Warriors were setting the standard for tag teams. That all ended with Rick and Scott."

Senior Editor Bill Apter: "This is one of the greatest tag teams of all-time, and it's good to see they're still going strong. You'd expect brothers to know each other very well, but their knowledge of each other is uncanny. You can see why they've been reluctant to team with other wrestlers."

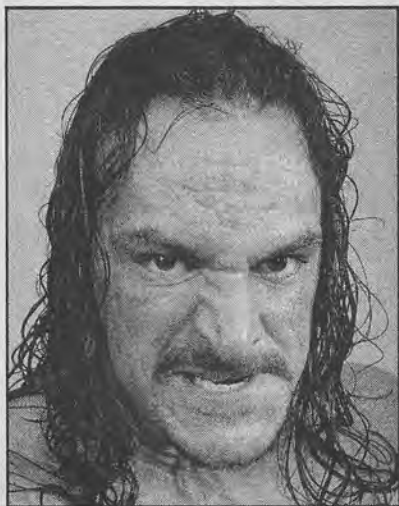
Senior Writer Eddie Ellner: "The Steiners are a good team, but the idea that they ran The Road Warriors or anyone out of WCW is ridiculous. They get in trouble when they start believing they're invincible."

*Scott &
Rick
Steiner*



SCOUTING REPORT:

SABU



MONTHLY RATINGS FOR 1996: No. 7 International (January); No. 4 International (February); Not rated (March); No. 5 ECW (April, May); No. 3 ECW (June-August); No. 8 ECW (September); No. 5 ECW (October); No. 3 ECW (November); No. 5 ECW (December)

RECORD IN PAY-PER-VIEWS:
Singles: 1-0

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Sabu comes out flying, but he's really dangerous in the 7-to-12-minute range of matches, when he's warmed up and has a bead on his opponent. It's not that Sabu can't go the distance; he can, and has. But Sabu needs to sweat in order to show his best stuff.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: As reckless as any wrestler in history, Sabu comes out with both guns blasting and can be vulnerable to a counter-

wrestler who refuses to chase him around the ring. The key to beating Sabu is counterwrestling, not wrestling, and Sabu tends to be too keyed up—and therefore beatable—in the opening minutes.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE: Brawlers, especially those with some aerial ability, really bring out the best in Sabu, who loves the blood and sweat of a tough wrestling match. Sabu has actually done some of his worst work against his weakest opponents. A top wrestler brings out the best and most imaginative Sabu.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE: Really big men who aren't easily knocked off their feet and tend to stand in the center of the ring while Sabu tries to execute moves from the top rope and outside the ring. Sabu's best just isn't effective against these types. He also would have a real hard time moonsaulting a much bigger man through a wooden table.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: The moonsault. Believe it or not, Sabu's spectacular maneuver is also the best way to beat him. Not only have Sabu's opponents not found a counter to the moonsault, neither has Sabu.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: Power moves such as flying clotheslines and power bombs. Sabu is all reck-

less finesse, all straight-ahead speed. He needs to find a way to change the pace of his matches.

WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: Arabian facebuster. Sometimes Sabu executes it two or three times a match—it's as much a setup move as a finisher—and he can do it from any part of the ring.

OUR COMMENTS

Senior Editor Bill Apter: "Sabu's one of the most exciting wrestlers of all-time, but he's also the most independent I've ever seen. Money seems to mean absolutely nothing to him. He's in it for the sport and refuses to kowtow to anyone."

Senior Writer Eddie Ellner: "I admire Sabu's spirit and his independence. It's rare in this day that you find an athlete who cares more about his sport than money. It's refreshing. People shouldn't criticize Sabu for not wrestling in WCW or the WWF; they should praise him."

Photo Editor Jason Ross Lavin: "Anybody who has ever watched a Sabu match live at ECW Arena knows what excitement is all about. Sabu seems to invent new moves as he goes along, and every single one of his matches is an adventure."

Sabu



SCOUTING REPORT:

GOLDUST



MONTHLY RATING: Not rated (January); No. 7 WWF (February); No. 9 WWF (March); No. 6 WWF, No. 13 overall (April); No. 2 WWF, No. 9 overall (May); No. 2 WWF, No. 7 overall (June); No. 2 WWF, No. 7 overall (July); No. 2 WWF, No. 13 overall (August); No. 2 WWF, No. 6 overall (September); No. 3 WWF, No. 12 overall (October); No. 5 WWF, No. 11 overall (November); No. 3 WWF, No. 5 overall (December)

RECORD IN PAY-PER-VIEWS: Singles: 11-6-2; tag teams: 2-2

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Although Goldust is proud of his ability to go the distance, he seems to do his best work between the four- and nine-minute marks of matches, when he's able to wrestle all-out and nonstop.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: The former Dustin Rhodes tends to sustain the most punishment during the middle (nine-to-15-minute marks) of matches, after his early attack has ended. Records show that most of Dustin's losses have been suffered between 10 and 14 minutes.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE: Brawlers. Like his father, the great Dusty Rhodes, Goldust relies very little on science and has almost no aerial ability. He excels at brawling, and it doesn't matter how big the opposing brawler might be; Goldust has fared well against The Undertaker and once dominated Arn Anderson in a series of matches.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE: Scientific wrestlers who won't budge from their game plan. Aerial wrestlers who move in quick bursts, taking advantage of his lack of speed. Men who have grudges to settle with his father. Anyone who refuses to be intimidated by his bizarre mind games.

HOLD HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: Submission holds targeting his legs. Goldust does not like wrestling on the mat.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: A piledriver. Goldust is one of the few

brawlers who doesn't use this crippling move very often.

WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: Right fist. Goldust packs a powerful wallop, with the power coming from his right shoulder. Also, don't let his psychological warfare intimidate you.

OUR COMMENTS

Senior Editor Bill Apter: "Maybe Dustin got frustrated by the lack of progress he was making in WCW. Well, you can say what you want about him, but he has fared pretty well in the WWF. After all, he is a former WWF Intercontinental champion and he has come close to winning the World title."

Managing Editor Brandi Mankiewicz: "Goldust still seems more concerned with shocking people than wrestling his best match every night. Dustin Rhodes earned a lot of people's respect; Goldust hasn't."

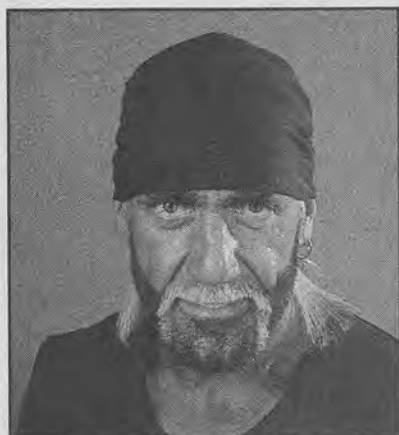
Senior Writer Dave Rosenbaum: "Sure, Goldust is a good brawler, but he made the mistake of getting Roddy Piper angry and that was a brawl he couldn't win. Then he got Ahmed Johnson angry and considering the disparity in talent, that was a lost cause, too."

Goldust



SCOUTING REPORT:

HULK HOGAN



MONTHLY RATINGS FOR 1996:

No. 1 WCW, No. 2 overall (January); No. 3 WCW, No. 7 overall (February); No. 4 WCW, No. 5 overall (March); No. 6 WCW, No. 11 overall (April); No. 3 WCW, No. 1 overall (May); No. 4 WCW, No. 6 overall (June); No. 4 WCW, No. 9 overall (July); No. 5 WCW, No. 11 overall (August); Not rated (September, October, November); No. 1 WCW, No. 2 overall (December)

RECORD IN PAY-PER-VIEWS:

Tag teams: 8-3-0; singles: 17-3-1; has won two Royal Rumbles

STRONGEST PART OF HIS

MATCHES: The "Hulkster" is a notorious slow starter who doesn't turn up his energy level until his opponent is on the verge of pinning him. Because Hogan doesn't have great stamina, he's best in the 8-to-13-minute mark of matches. But with Hogan on the outs with the fans, he might try to start faster.

WEAKEST PART OF THE

MATCHES: The early portions. Andre the Giant nearly pinned Hogan in the first minute of their WrestleMania III encounter, and opponents have had their best success catching Hogan with his guard down. Hogan has done surprisingly well in marathon matches and still seems to be able to come up with an extra burst of energy when he needs it.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO

FACE: Scientific wrestlers with stamina—men such as Sting, Bret Hart, and Ted DiBiase. DiBiase gave Hogan everything he could handle in marathon matches when he first arrived in the WWF. He could have serious problems if he gets locked in a prolonged feud with Sting.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE:

Bigger-they-come, harder-they-fall types such as The Giant, Big Van Vader, Andre the Giant, and King Kong Bundy have been humbled by Hogan, who rises to the occasion when placed in an underdog situation. Hogan slammed Andre, got up from Vader's power bomb, rebounded from The Giant's choke-slam, and manhandled Bundy. Fact: You don't outbrawl or overpower Hulk Hogan.

HOLD HE'S MOST VULNERA-

BLE TO: Backbreakers, Boston crabs, and any other holds that put pressure on Hogan's chronically injured back.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A

HUGE PLUS: A violent, vicious finishing maneuver such as the choke-slam or power bomb would be perfect for Hogan, who has always relied on his big boot-legdrop-pin combination. But there is no fear factor for Hogan's opponents; they know he's not going to seriously injure them with that combo.

WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE

SURE TO AVOID HIS: Legdrop. If he does connect with it, the match is likely to be over about three seconds later.

OUR COMMENTS:

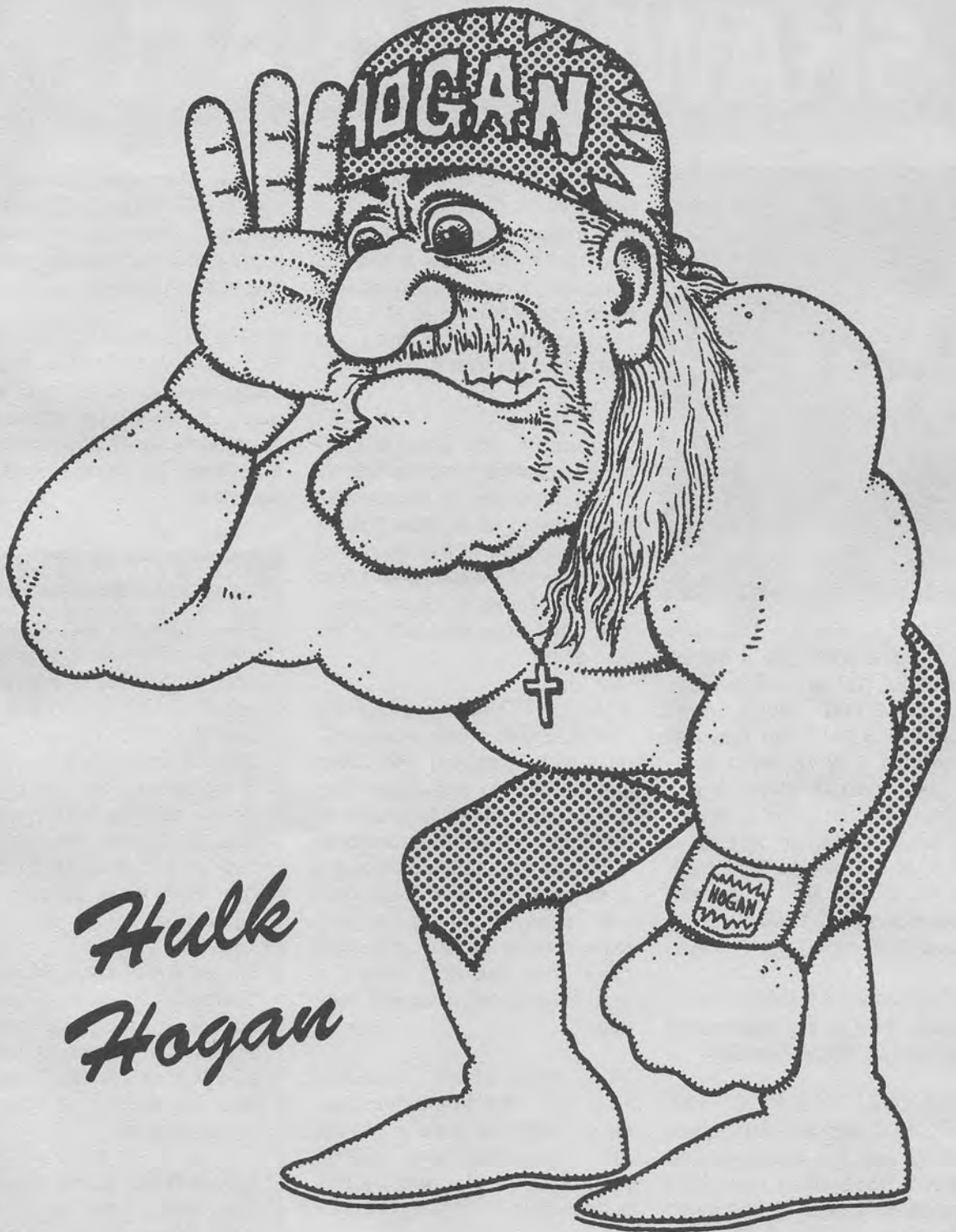
Publisher Stu Saks: "The detractors have been wrong about Hogan for more than 15 years. It no longer makes any sense to question his limited repertoire. It's like criticizing Babe Ruth because all he did was hit home runs."

Managing Editor Brandi

Mankiewicz: "Hogan's writing a new chapter in his career, and I believe he will regret the day he turned rulebreaker."

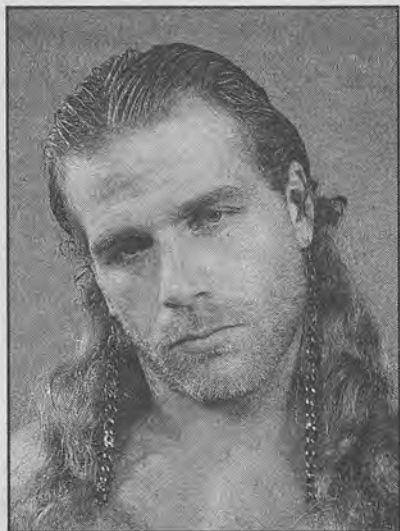
Senior Writer Eddie Ellner:

"It took a long time for Hogan to show some character, and when he did, he turned against the same people who made him rich. I don't think it matters how much Hogan accomplishes. Would you want your son or daughter to grow up and be like him?"



SCOUTING REPORT:

SHAWN MICHAELS



MONTHLY RATINGS FOR 1996: No. 2 WWF, No. 4 overall (January); Not rated February-April; No. 3 WWF, No. 5 overall (May); No. 3 WWF, No. 5 overall (June); No. 1 WWF, No. 1 overall (July); No. 1 WWF, No. 1 overall (August); No. 1 WWF, No. 1 overall (September); No. 1 WWF, No. 2 overall (October); No. 1 WWF, No. 2 overall (November); No. 1 WWF, No. 1 overall (December)

RECORD IN PAY-PER-VIEWS: Singles: 11-4-3; tag teams: 5-5; has won two Royal Rumbles

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Michaels knows just how to use his stamina and doesn't have what would be considered a peak performance point in his matches. He likes to say that he wrestles just as effectively in the first minute as he does in the 30th; it's his opponent who gets weaker.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Occasionally runs into trouble five or 10 minutes into tough matches, when his opponent is still geared up and fresh and Michaels is still concentrating on stretching the match into the later minutes.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE: Opponents who wrestle fast-paced scientific matches and try plenty of high-risk maneuvers have almost no chance against Michaels, who is the master of this type of match. Send him The Kid, Sting, or Savio Vega. You can't beat Michaels at his own game.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE: Slow, methodical plodders with wrestling skill. Men such as Diesel and Davey Boy Smith have taken Michaels to the limit on several occasions. Michaels has had a particularly difficult time with Bret Hart, who relies on smarts and skill rather than speed. He also runs into trouble when a match turns more violent than usual.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: The clothesline, because Michaels likes to wrestle at a fast pace and can be stunned and stopped by this sudden thud.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: A submission hold. If he could master one such

as, say, the "sharpshooter," he could really keep opponents guessing. They would have to worry about being finished off by that or the superkick.

WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: Flying bodypress. Graceful and elegant, the flying bodypress is deceptively lethal. If he executes it perfectly, he doesn't need the superkick.

OUR COMMENTS:

Senior Editor Bill Apter: "It's great to see a talented wrestler like Shawn with the belt. The WWF World championship had a history of being a brawler's title, with Bruno Sammartino and Hulk Hogan having a stranglehold on it until the early-1990s, but Michaels and Bret Hart have given it a new image."

Senior Writer Dave Rosenbaum: "Michaels is not only one of the most talented wrestlers in the world, he's also one of the most reckless. And that's what makes him so exciting."

Senior Writer Eddie Ellner: "Michaels' character came from years of being the underdog. Like Ric Flair, he proves that talent tells in this sport."



Shawn Michaels

SCOUTING REPORT:

JEFF JARRETT



MONTHLY RATINGS FOR 1996: Not rated (January-March); No. 1 USWA, No. 9 overall (April); No. 1 USWA, No. 7 WWF (May); No. 1 USWA (June); Not rated (July); No. 1 USWA (August); No. 1 USWA, No. 10 overall (September, October); No. 1 USWA, No. 12 overall (November); No. 4 NAASW (December)

RECORD IN PAY-PER-VIEWS: Singles: 2-5; tag teams: 1-1

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: The longer the better for Jarrett, whose stamina is virtually unrivaled in wrestling. Jarrett's just getting started when the clock hits 20:00, and he has wrestled 30-minute-plus classics against Jerry Lawler and other top stars.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Jarrett tends to get lazy in the early stages. He'll

pose for the crowd, play to the crowd, taunt his opponent, and do just about everything but wrestle. Maybe one of the reasons Jarrett has such great stamina is because he does so little so early.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE: Although "Double-J" doesn't have the size to match up well in power battles with the biggest men in the sport, he has scored some of his most important victories over big brawlers. Twice he won the WWF Intercontinental championship from Razor Ramon (6'8", 290 pounds). On the other hand, he also won it from Bob Holly (6'1", 231 pounds). Jarrett has also toppled 568 pounds of Mabel.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE: Aerial wrestlers who like to strike quickly and end matches early. Jarrett once suffered an especially embarrassing loss to The 1-2-3 Kid. He also has his hands full against very strong men such as Ahmed Johnson.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: The powerslam. Because he isn't especially big or strong, Jarrett is easy prey for this power maneuver that, more often than not, is followed by a pin.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: A legdrop. Jarrett would be able to exe-

cute it quickly and with great precision.

WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: Piledriver. Though Jarrett is relatively small for a wrestler, his piledriver is among the finest in the sport. He learned it from Jerry Lawler, and his is quickly catching Lawler's in effectiveness.

OUR COMMENTS:

Publisher Stu Saks: "The good news for Jarrett is that he finally stopped singing and started focusing more on his wrestling again. He has held on to the USWA heavyweight title longer than anyone in recent memory, and there's a good reason for that: He's the best wrestler in the federation."

Editor-in-Chief Dave Lenker: "At times, Jarrett seemed to have a hard time handling the bright lights and fame of the WWF. I know he won three I-C titles, but he has done his best wrestling in the USWA."

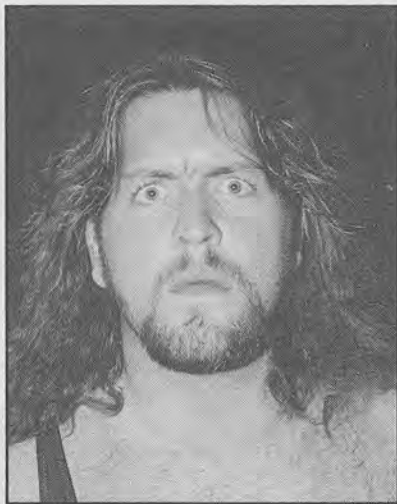
Senior Editor Bill Apter: "I've known Jarrett for a long time and, frankly, I was surprised by his behavior in the WWF. He's always been so mild-mannered. Maybe he felt the need to stir things up."



Jeff Jarrett

SCOUTING REPORT:

THE GIANT



MONTHLY RATINGS FOR

1996: Not rated (January); No. 2 WCW, No. 3 overall (February); No. 3 WCW (March); No. 7 WCW, No. 14 overall (April); No. 5 WCW, No. 6 overall (May); No. 5 WCW, No. 8 overall (June); No. 5 WCW, No. 8 overall (July); No. 1 WCW, No. 2 overall (August); No. 1 WCW, No. 2 overall (September); No. 1 WCW, No. 1 overall (October); No. 1 WCW, No. 1 overall (November); No. 3 WCW, No. 3 overall (December)

RECORD IN PAY-PER-VIEWS:

Singles: 3-1; tag teams: 1-0

STRONGEST PART OF HIS

MATCHES: The Giant likes to strike early and get his opponent into position for a choke-slam as quickly as possible. Although he never wrestles all-out in the classic sense of expending energy quickly, he tends to end his matches before they reach the 10-minute mark.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS

MATCHES: Although The Giant hasn't shown too many weaknesses, he faltered against Hulk Hogan in 15 minutes—traditionally Hogan's peak period—at SuperBrawl VI and gets easily frustrated when things don't go his way early.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE:

Smaller opponents with non-muscular necks—the better to apply his choke-slam. Scientific wrestlers such as Ric Flair and Sting are beating their heads against the wall against The Giant, who isn't easily felled by men quicker and more agile than he is.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO

FACE: Large veterans who aren't easily intimidated. The Giant relies greatly on the fear factor, and opponents who aren't in awe of him realize early that The Giant doesn't come into the ring with a huge repertoire.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERA-

BLE TO: Anything that can damage his legs. Once he's down on the mat, he's very ordinary.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS

REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: A backbreaker. He has the size and height, so why not?

WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE

SURE TO AVOID HIS: Choke-slam. Only one man, Hulk Ho-

gan, has ever gotten up from The Giant's choke-slam. Our guess is that he wouldn't want to test his luck again.

OUR COMMENTS:

Editor-in-Chief Dave Len-

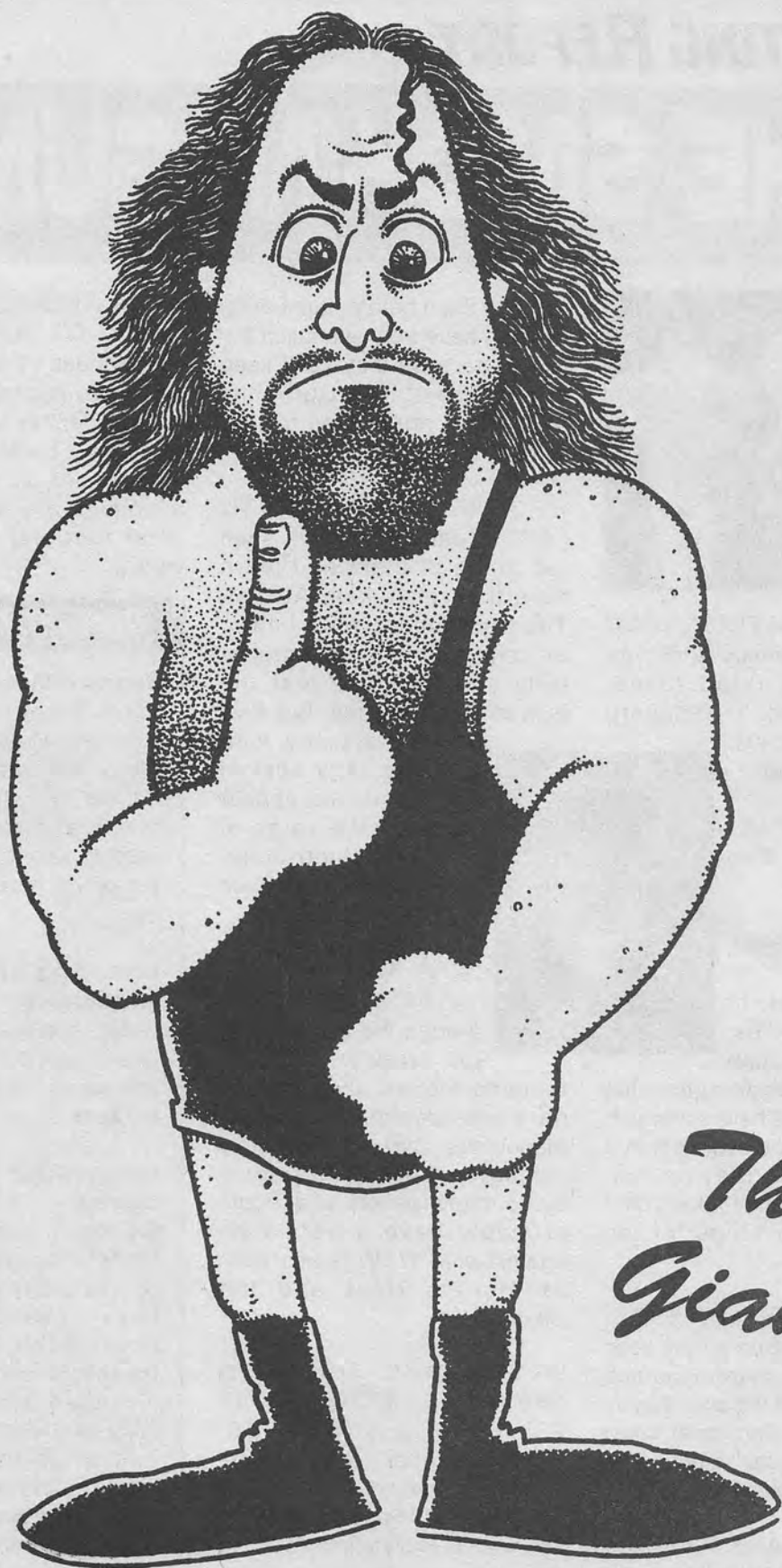
ker: "It's perfect that WCW, which has become what some feel is the old WWF, has a big wrestler as its champion. With Shawn Michaels on top in the WWF, the two federations seem to have gone full-circle, but The Giant is more than just a powerful big man. He can wrestle."

Senior Editor Bill Apter:

"Nobody expected The Giant to hold on to the WCW World title for as long as he has. Although his choke-slam is awesome, people figured The Giant was too young and inexperienced and prone to making mistakes, but he has proven himself against the best in the world. How good will he be in five years?"

Managing Editor Brandi

Mankiewicz: "They say the bigger they come, the harder they fall. The Giant's one of the biggest men I've ever seen, and he hasn't fallen yet."



*The
Giant*

SCOUTING REPORT:

THE SMOKIN' GUNNS



MONTHLY RATINGS FOR 1996: No. 1 (January-April); No. 2 (May); Not rated (June-September); No. 1 (October); No. 3 (November); No. 2 (December)

RECORD IN PAY-PER-VIEWS: Tag teams: 6-1

STRONGEST PART OF THEIR MATCHES:

Once capable of pacing themselves, Billy and Bart Gunn now come out smoking from the opening bell and have been getting their matches over with in a hurry. Perhaps they're concerned about Sunny taking off if they leave her alone for too long.

WEAKEST PART OF THEIR MATCHES:

The Gunns have been involved in few marathons and have lost many of the ones they've fought. Billy and Bart prefer a fast pace and usually can't sustain it for more than 15 minutes.

WHO THEY WANT TO FACE: Brawlers who haven't seen

much of them before. Lumbering big men have trouble against the Gunns because they can't keep up with them. The Godwinns have been prime foes for the Gunns.

WHO THEY DON'T WANT TO FACE:

Teams that have seen too much of them and learn from their mistakes. At first, The Bodydonnas were having an impossible time against Billy and Bart and lost the bulk of their matches. But Skip and Zip are now winning regularly against the Gunns and appear to be on the verge of re-establishing themselves as the top team in the WWF.



MOVE THEY'RE MOST VULNERABLE TO:

Although the Gunns have an array of double-teaming moves, they have a hard time dealing with aerial maneuvers. Billy and Bart have not proven themselves as quality counterwrestlers and would probably have a hard time against elite WCW teams such as Harlem Heat and the Steiners.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO THEIR REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS:

The "sidewinder," their favorite finishing maneuver, could easily be converted into a piledriver at either end, really shaking up an opponent.

WHEN WRESTLING THEM, BE SURE TO AVOID THEIR:

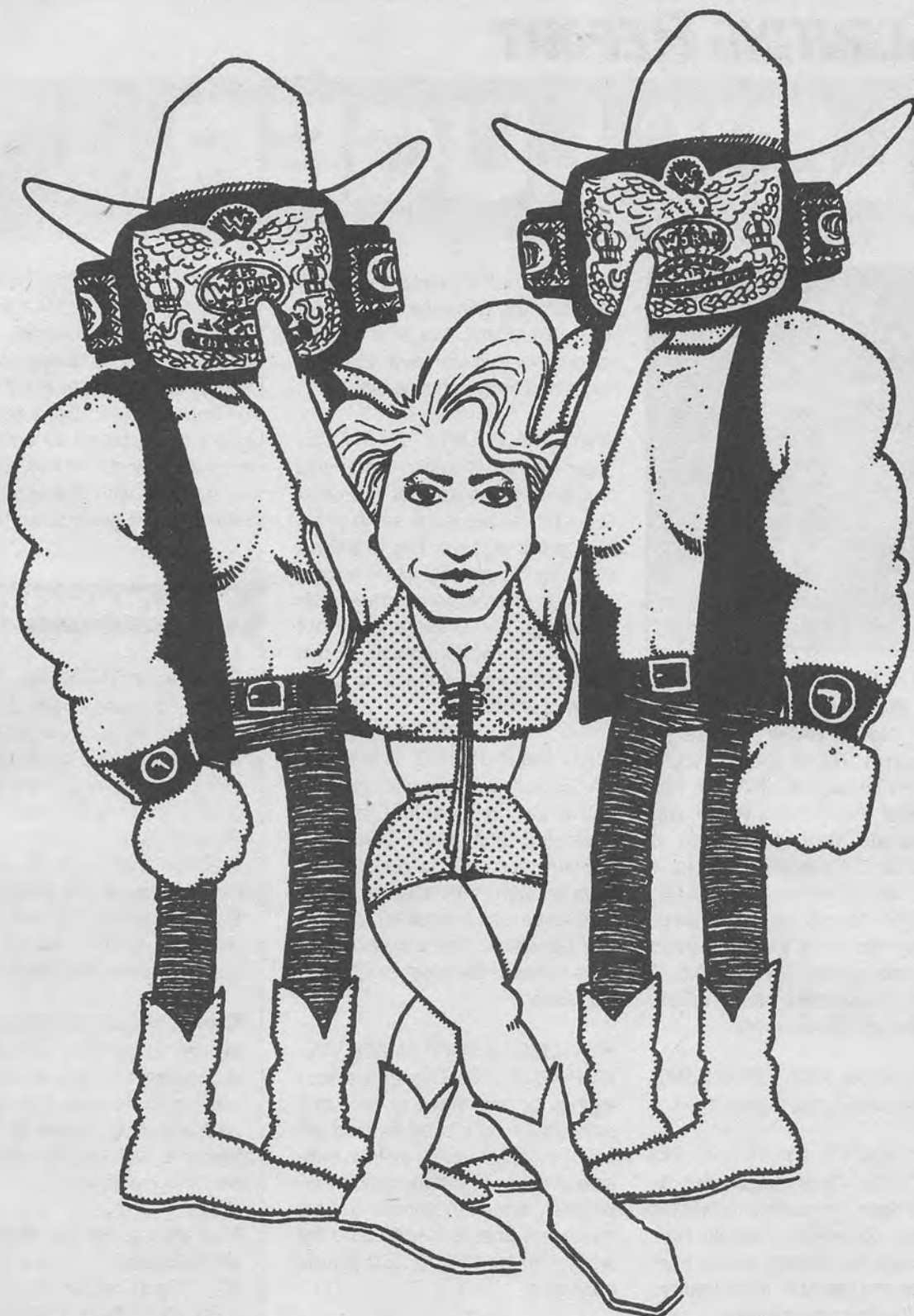
"Sidewinder." The double-drop-kicks are impressive, but the "sidewinder," in which one Gunn executes a backbreaker and the other comes off the top rope for a legdrop, is a finely tuned finisher that just about always works.

OUR COMMENTS:

Senior Editor Bill Apter: "I think Sunny is distracting Billy and Bart. They seem more interested in impressing her than in just winning their matches. It's unfortunate, but not surprising, that a woman has caught their eye."

Managing Editor Brandi Mankiewicz: "The Smokin' Gunns don't seem to realize Sunny will drop them in a split-second when they lose the belts."

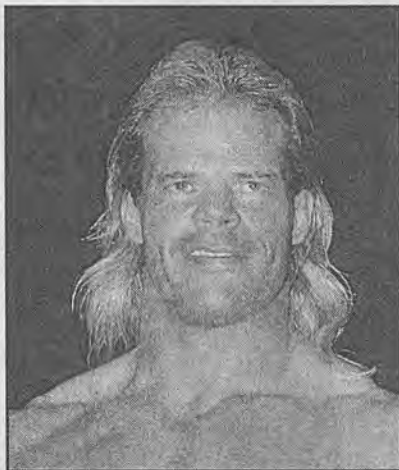
Senior Writer Dave Rosenbaum: "The Smokin' Gunns' place in the tag team ratings is a subject of debate every week around here. The WWF can't equal WCW in caliber of tag teams, and I don't think it makes sense to have Billy and Bart at number one when the Steiners, Harlem Heat, and The Nasty Boys are all in the other federation."



The Smokin' Gunns

SCOUTING REPORT:

LEX LUGER



MONTHLY RATINGS FOR 1996:

No. 3 WCW, No. 5 overall (January); No. 5 WCW, 5 overall (February); No. 5 WCW, No. 4 overall (March); No. 3 WCW, No. 10 overall (April); No. 8 WCW, No. 14 overall (May, June); No. 6 WCW, No. 12 overall (July); No. 4 WCW, No. 6 overall (August); No. 4 WCW, No. 8 overall (September); No. 4 WCW, No. 6 overall (October); No. 4 WCW, No. 7 overall (November); No. 5 WCW, No. 7 overall (December)

RECORD IN PAY-PER-VIEWS:

Singles: 13-8-1; tag teams: 1-3-1

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES:

Once a solid middle man, Luger now prefers to end his matches as early as possible. He's more likely to wrestle all-out from the opening bell and settle matters within the first nine minutes.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES:

Although Luger has wrestled in 20- and 30-plus-minute matches against some of the best

wrestlers in the world, including Ric Flair and Sting, he hasn't won many of them. Luger's knees haven't held up well over the long haul since early in his career.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE:

Luger has wrestled his most memorable matches against Flair and Sting, but he has done some of his best work against big brawlers such as Yokozuna. He's strong enough to overcome their size advantage and proud enough not to lose a brawl. Of course, at this point in his career, that's no guarantee of winning.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE:

Any wrestler with stamina and a strong technical, tactical repertoire. Other than a very effective vertical suplex, Luger does not have enough in his scientific repertoire to get by against technicians and tacticians. The losses to Flair were some of the most crushing of his career.

HOLD/MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO:

The figure-four leglock or any move or hold that puts strain on his oft-injured left knee. In fact, Luger's even vulnerable to his own "torture rack" backbreaker, because sometimes his knees are unable to withstand the weight of holding a 250-pound opponent.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS:

A piledriver. It would fit nicely in his power-oriented repertoire.

WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS:

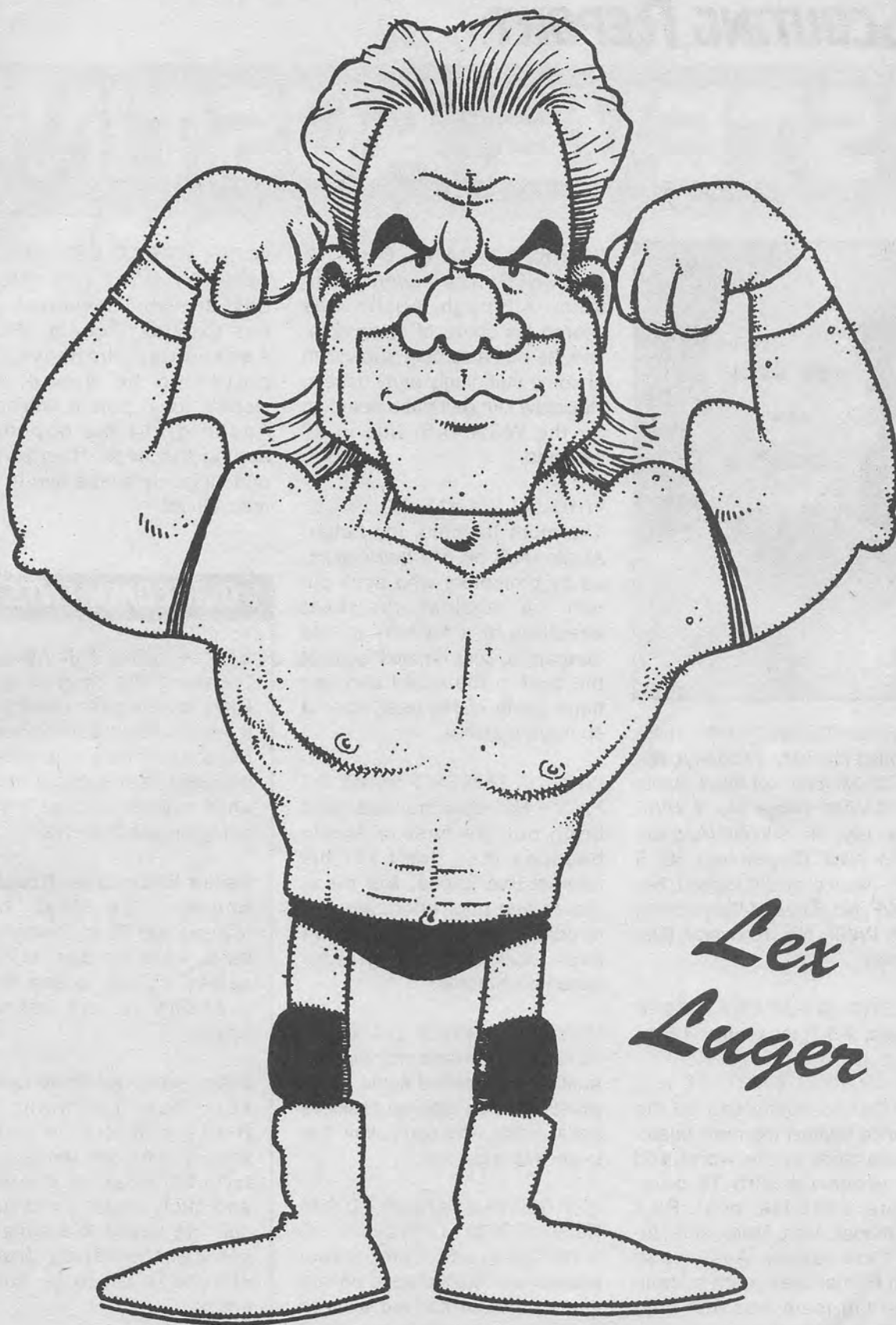
Clotheslines and forearm smashes to the head. The "rack" is dangerous, but Luger is sometimes hesitant to use it. Clotheslines, delivered by Luger's huge, muscular arms, are devastating, and if he hits you with that forearm with the steel plate inside it, you're going down fast.

OUR COMMENTS:

Publisher Stu Saks: "Luger's career has been detoured by a series of bad advice and decisions. Ten years ago, he was billed as a future superstar, the next Hulk Hogan, but he never reached that level because he didn't have the patience. He's certainly just as talented as Hogan, but he hasn't gotten the breaks Hogan got."

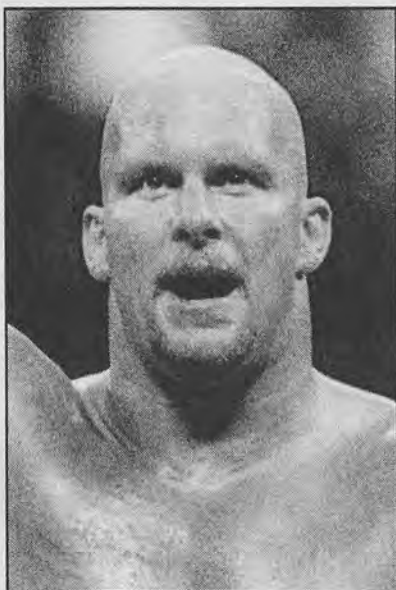
Senior Writer Dave Rosenbaum: "Luger has everything you'd want in a superstar: talent, an incredible physique, and a strong desire to win. What he lacks is the mind to put him over the top."

Managing Editor Brandi Mankiewicz: "I think a lot of the criticism Luger has heard over the years has been unfair. He's a consistent winner who's always at or near the top of the federation in which he is wrestling."



SCOUTING REPORT:

STEVE AUSTIN



MONTHLY RATINGS FOR 1996:

Not rated (January, February); No. 2 ECW (March); Not rated (April); No. 10 WWF (May); No. 7 WWF (June, July); No. 9 WWF (August); No. 11 WWF (September); No. 5 WWF, No. 4 overall (October); No. 4 WWF, No. 8 overall (November); No. 5 WWF, No. 10 overall (December)

RECORD IN PAY-PER-VIEWS:

Singles: 9-3-1; tag teams: 4-5-1

STRONGEST PART OF HIS

MATCHES: Austin can go the distance against the most talented wrestlers in the world and has proven it with 15-plus-minute victories over Rick Steamboat, Marc Mero, and others. One reason Austin and Brian Pillman were such a formidable tag team was that both had tremendous stamina and never got tired.

WEAKEST PART OF THE

MATCHES: The opening minutes. Although Austin has scored his share of early victories, he has also been the victim of some stunningly early upsets. Hacksaw Duggan once beat him for the WCW U.S. title in 27 seconds.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE:

The more talented, the better. Austin feels he has been slighted by promoters who don't put him up against the best wrestlers in a federation. He hungers to test himself against the best in the world and has done some of his best work in spotlight matches.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO

FACE: Mid-level brawlers don't bring out the best in Austin because they don't stir his competitive juices. But these losses and poor efforts against middle-of-the-card men have kept Austin from greater accomplishments.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERA-

BLE TO: Top-rope maneuvers. Austin has wrestled some of his worst matches against reckless aerial artists who don't allow him to get into a groove.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS

REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: Some aerial maneuvers. Austin would be that much better if he had a more complete repertoire of moves. If Austin could fly, he'd soar.

WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE

SURE TO AVOID HIS: "Stone-Cold Stunner." Somewhat similar to Rick Rude's "Rude Awakening," the move has proven to be one of the world's most potent finishers. Austin grabs his opponent behind the neck, then swiftly and viciously snaps him to the mat. *Ouch!*

OUR COMMENTS:

Senior Editor Bill Apter:

"Winning the King of the Ring tournament meant a lot to Austin's confidence. For the first time in a while, he really seems like a man on a mission. I think he's going places this time."

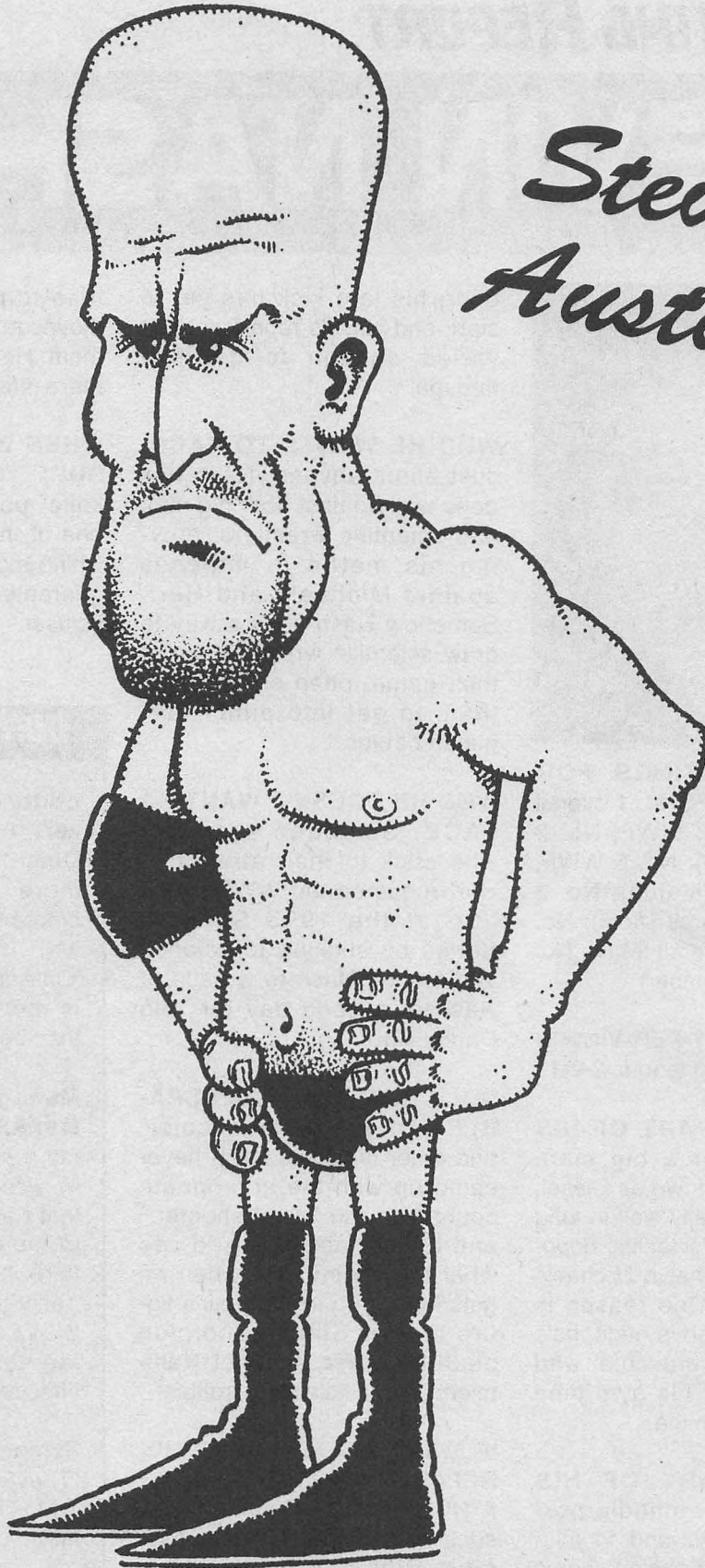
Senior Writer Dave Rosen-

baum: "The days he teamed with Brian Pillman, I think, were the best of his career. I'd like to see him wrestling in tag teams again."

Editor-in-Chief Dave Len-

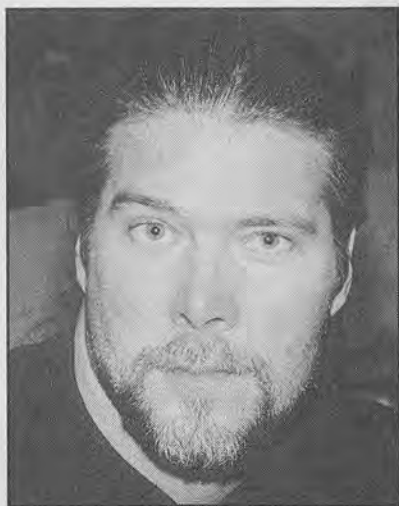
ker: "Austin sometimes thinks a match is over when it isn't. He tends not to finish what he started and often needs a wakeup call. He needs to maintain his concentration from start to finish to be successful."

*Steve
Austin*



SCOUTING REPORT:

KEVIN NASH



MONTHLY RATINGS FOR 1996: No. 1 WWF, No. 1 overall (January); No. 3 WWF, No. 2 overall (February); No. 5 WWF, No. 10 overall (March); No. 3 WWF, No. 3 overall (April); No. 4 WWF, No. 3 overall (May); Not rated (June-December)

RECORD IN PAY-PER-VIEWS: Singles: 5-7-1; tag teams: 2-2-1

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: For a big man, Nash, formerly known as Diesel, has fared especially well in long matches against scientific opponents such as Shawn Michaels and Bret Hart. One reason is that although Nash is huge, he's not particularly muscular and spends most of his gym time improving his stamina.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: The middle portions—between six and 11 minutes—when Nash's mind seems to wander; his early charge is

over, his late kick has yet to start, and Nash's repertoire isn't varied enough to get him through.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE:

Just about anyone. Nash has done well against both big men and scientific wrestlers, proving his mettle in matches against Michaels and Hart. Somehow Nash finds a way to draw scientific wrestlers out of their game, often encouraging them to get into punch-for-punch battles.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO

FACE: Scientific wrestlers who stick to their strengths. Hart regained the WWF World title at the 1995 Survivor Series by sticking to science and forcing Nash to wrestle. It was not a good day for "Big Daddy Cool."

HOLD HE'S MOST VULNERA-

BLE TO: The "sharpshooter" and other leglocks. Nash never came up with the appropriate counter to the "sharpshooter," and it'll be fascinating to see what happens if and when he gets locked up in Ric Flair's figure-four or Sting's Scorpion deathlock. We suspect Nash might be in a little bit of trouble.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE

A HUGE PLUS: Countermoves such as backslides and sunset flips. Diesel is not a strong counterwrestler because he

tries to power his way out of moves rather than wrestle out of them. He needs to use his mind more often.

WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS:

"Jack-knife" power bomb. It's simply one of the most dangerous finishing moves in the sport and a guaranteed ticket to victory for its user.

OUR COMMENTS:

Editor-in-Chief Dave Len-

ker: "I liked Nash better as Diesel. I think he was a more effective wrestler before he became obsessed with being one of these 'Outsiders.' Nevertheless, he is more intimidating now than he has ever been."

Managing Editor Brandi

Mankiewicz: "Diesel did more with less than any man in wrestling history, and that's a compliment, a tribute to his determination. But I think he's going to have a hard time dominating in WCW, although a Nash-Hall tag team could be very effective."

Senior Writer Eddie Ellner:

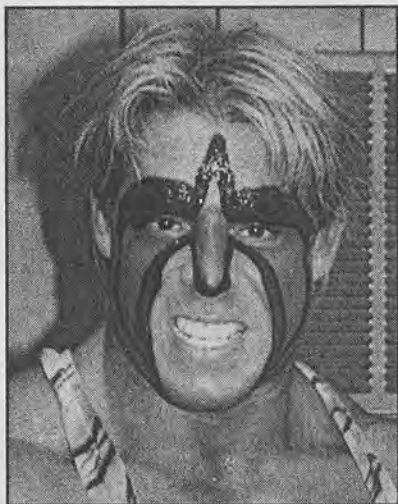
"They say every dog has his day. This dog already had his."

*Kevin
Nash*



SCOUTING REPORT:

THE ULTIMATE WARRIOR



MONTHLY RATINGS FOR 1996: Not rated (January-June); No. 5 WWF (July); No. 3 WWF, No. 12 overall (August); No. 4 WWF, No. 3 overall (September); No. 10 WWF (October); Not rated (November, December)

RECORD IN PAY-PER-VIEWS: Singles: 9-2; tag teams: 4-0

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Undoubtedly the opening minutes. Get through the first three minutes of a match against the Warrior and you have a decent shot at beating him. The Warrior wrestles all-out from the beginning. He storms the ring, attacks his opponent, and unleashes a frenzied assault. Some opponents have tried countering the Warrior by attacking him at the start, but it rarely works.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: The Warrior gets into trouble once a match extends

past seven or eight minutes, and he has rarely scored clean pins in matches extending beyond the 15-minute mark. He is simply a musclemen who lacks the aerobic capacity to go all-out for long stretches.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE: Other strong men. The Warrior has a magnificent physique and animalistic strength and is willing to match brawn with any wrestler in the world. He pinned Hulk Hogan for the WWF World title at WrestleMania VI and devastated musclemen Hercules Hernandez at the 1990 Survivor Series. The Warrior likes keeping things simple and wants to face an opponent who does the same.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE: Scientific wrestlers with stamina, although this one comes with a caveat: The Warrior might not like to face them, but he has fared pretty well against scientific experts and has scored pinfall victories over Rick Rude and Curt Hennig. But Hennig and Rude have returned the favor by keeping the Warrior off-balance, making him move, and turning matches into endurance tests Warrior can't win.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: Sunset flips and hip-tosses. The Warrior wrestles at full-speed during the first five minutes of his matches and doesn't do any counterwrestling at all. Trip him up during the onslaught and you might have him beat.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: A "sharpshooter" or figure-four leglock. The Warrior's onslaughts are too hit-or-miss. Yet his opponents are invariably weakened by the nonstop madness. Imagine if he finished off his series of clotheslines with a submission hold. He'd never lose!

WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: Clotheslines. They're like getting hit by a convoy of Mack trucks.

OUR COMMENTS:

Editor-in-Chief Dave Lerner: "The Warrior is an entertainer. He's not the greatest wrestler that ever lived, but he's definitely one of the most exciting. He sells tickets."

Senior Writer Eddie Ellner: "Wrestling isn't a sprint. It's a long-distance race, and that's all you need to know about why the Warrior's success has come in such short periods."

Contributing Editor Liz Hunter: "The Warrior spends so much time in the gym, you'd think he would have noticed the exercise bikes and the Stairmasters by now."



The Ultimate Warrior

SCOUTING REPORT:

HARLEM HEAT



MONTHLY RATINGS FOR 1996: No. 2 (January-March); No. 5 (April-June); Not rated (July-September); No. 2 (October, November); No. 1 (December)

RECORD IN PAY-PER-VIEWS: Tag teams: 5-5

STRONGEST PART OF THEIR MATCHES: Although they've fared better in long matches over the past year, streetfighting Booker T and Stevie Ray do their best work in the first 10 minutes and are especially good starters. They like a fast-paced match with plenty of action.

WEAKEST PART OF THEIR MATCHES: Anything longer than 15 minutes means trouble for the Heat, although their stamina is better than it used to be. Ray and T expend so much energy early on that they're just

about exhausted when a match hits 20 minutes, and they rarely win matches lasting longer more than 25 minutes.

WHO THEY WANT TO FACE: Stylish brawlers who are not that aggressive. Teams that mix brawling with science or aerial skill. The only way to beat Harlem Heat is by outbrawling them, and

that's easier said than done.

WHO THEY DON'T WANT TO FACE: A few years ago, The Nasty Boys gave Ray and T a terrible time. Harlem Heat is not the best streetfighting team in the world—they're just one of the best—and they have a hard time countering superior streetfighting teams.

MOVE THEY'RE MOST VULNERABLE TO: Double-drop-kicks. At times, they react slowly to double-team maneuvers.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO THEIR REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: Some science to go along with their spinning kicks and that lethal "Harlem Hangover." Ray and T just never seemed overly concerned with adding to their repertoire.

WHEN WRESTLING THEM, BE SURE TO AVOID THEIR: "Harlem Hangover." This top rope finisher is a spectacular somersault that almost always leaves opponents feeling hung over. Ray and T have the timing down to a T.

OUR COMMENTS:

Publisher Stu Saks: "Harlem Heat has surprised everyone with their overall skill and with how much they've improved over the past year. This once was a mid-level tag team incapable of beating the best, but now they're going head-to-head with the best in the world and doing well."

Senior Writer Dave Rosenbaum: "Who's managing this team, Col. Parker or Sherri Martel, and what's going to happen when Martel and Parker have their inevitable disagreement? Will the team fall apart, too?"

Editor-in-Chief Dave Lenker: "It's amazing that with the improved level of tag team competition in WCW, Harlem Heat still has the belts. Maybe they're just better than any of us thought."



Harlem Heat

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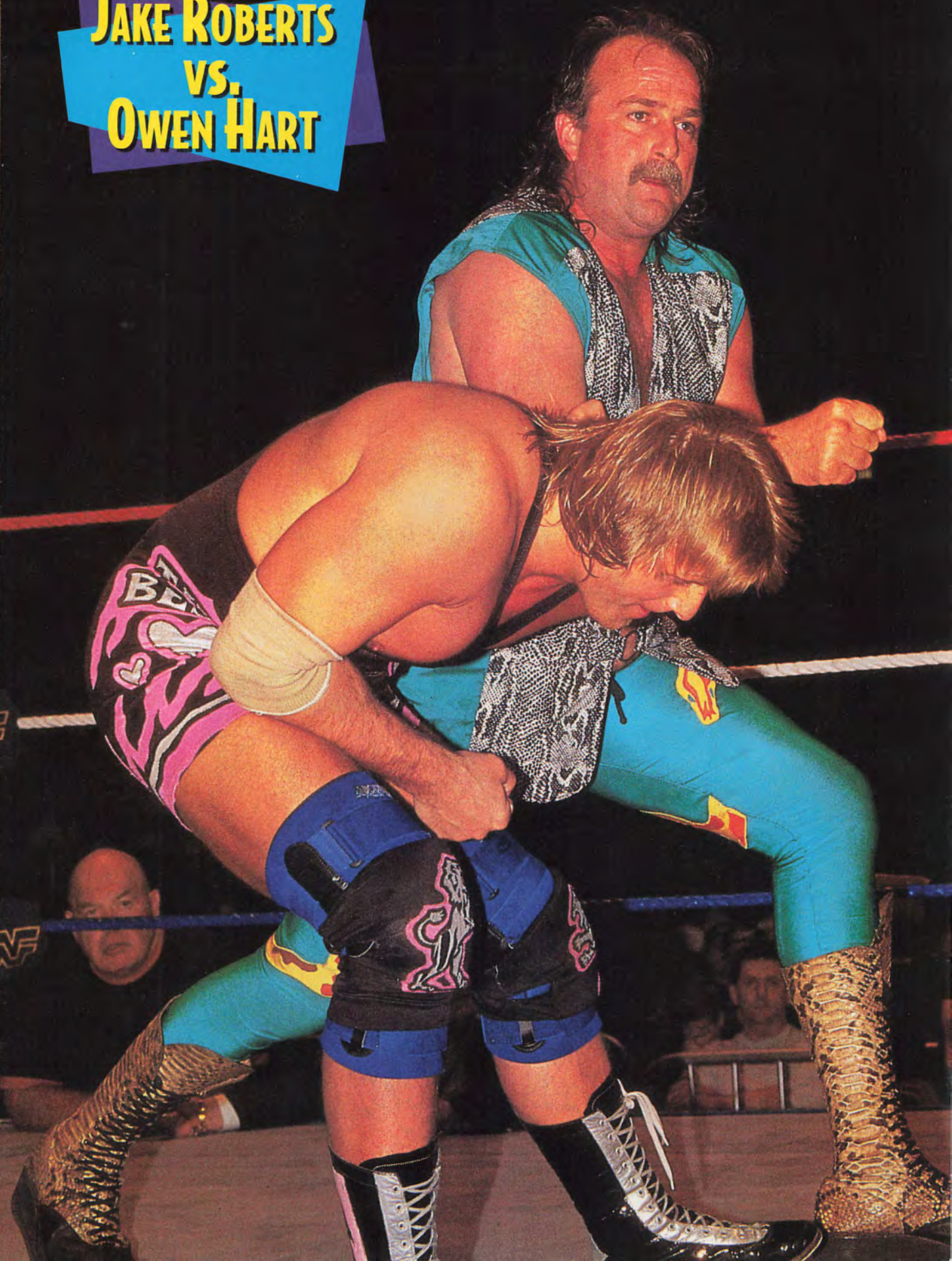
THE UNDERTAKER
VS.
SHAWN MICHAELS

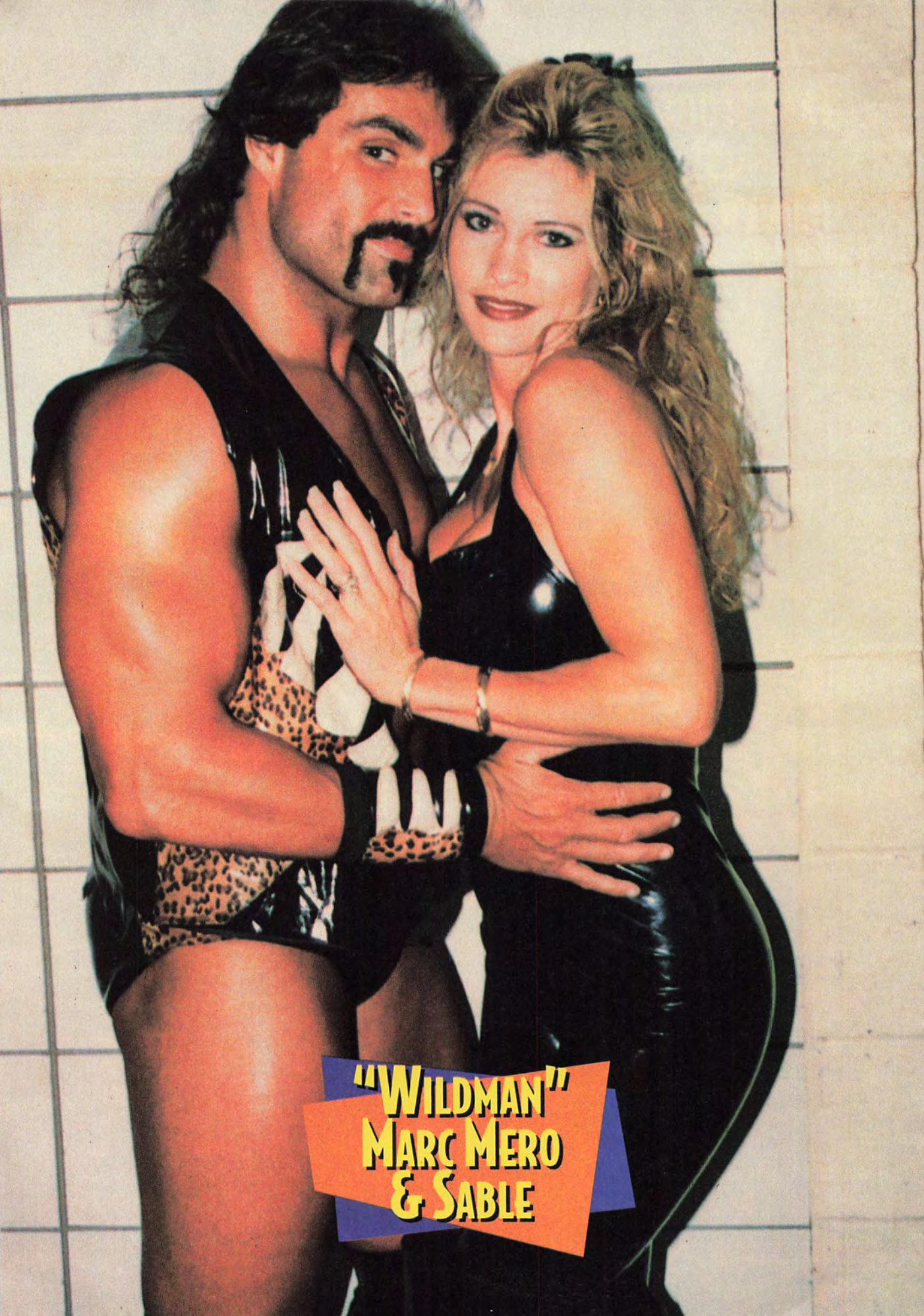


A close-up, low-angle shot of Ric Flair. He is wearing a bright green jacket covered in multi-colored sequins and beads. He has short, light-colored hair and is looking upwards with an open mouth, as if shouting or singing. His hands are clenched into fists, and he is wearing white rings on his fingers. The background is dark and out of focus.

RIC FLAIR

**JAKE ROBERTS
vs.
OWEN HART**





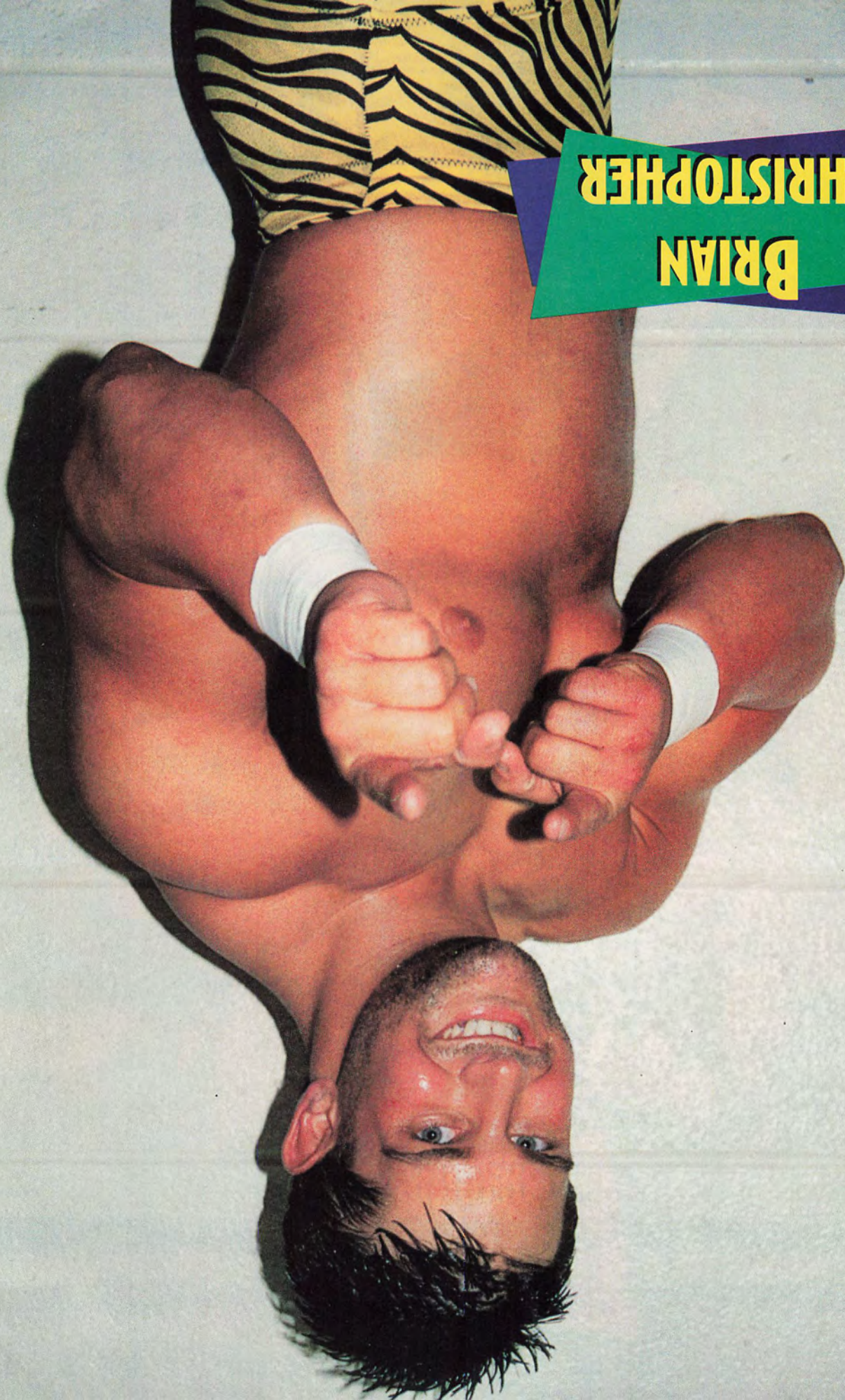
**"WILDMAN"
MARC MERO
& SABLE**

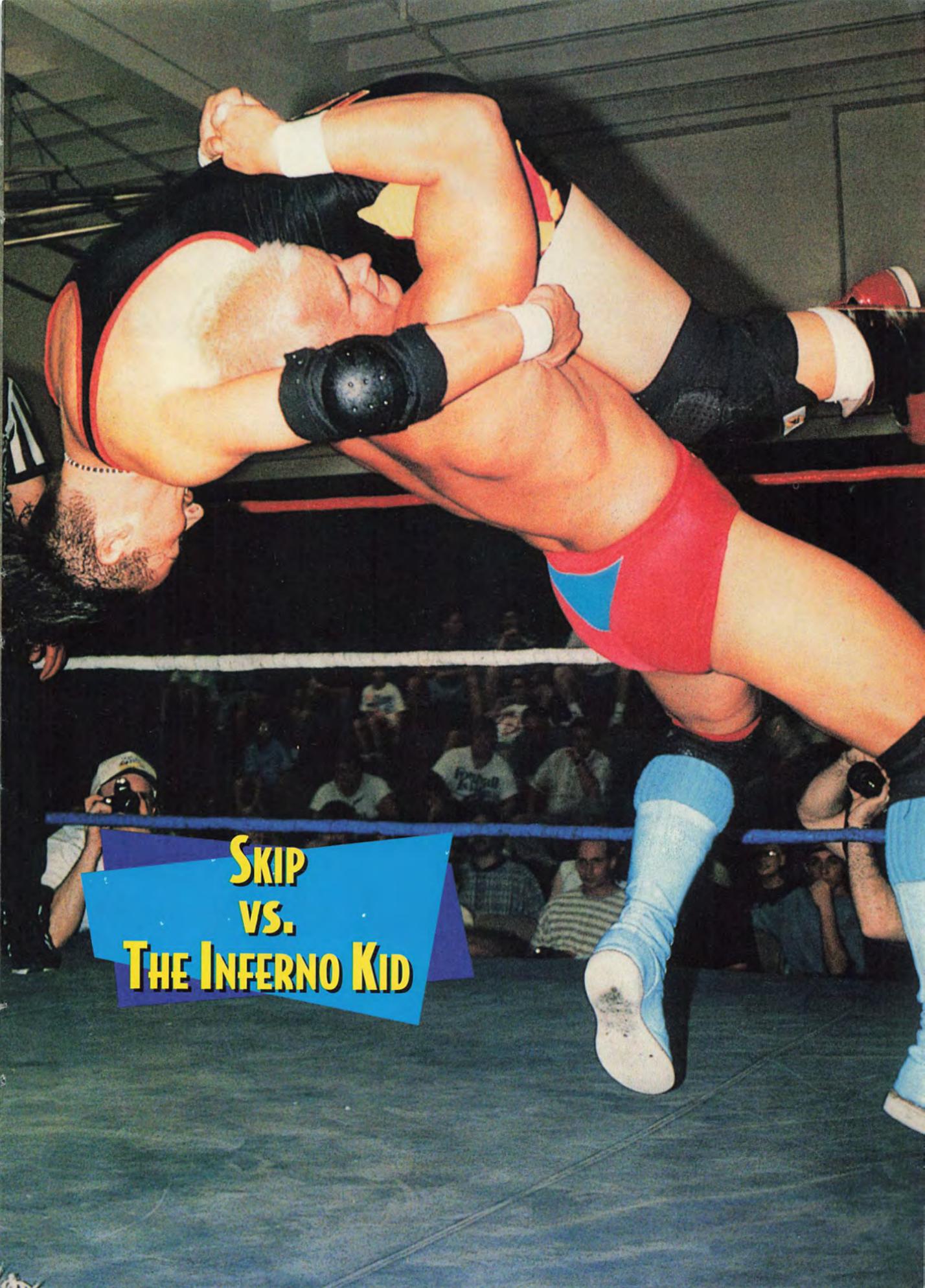
**LEX LUGER
VS.
ARN ANDERSON**



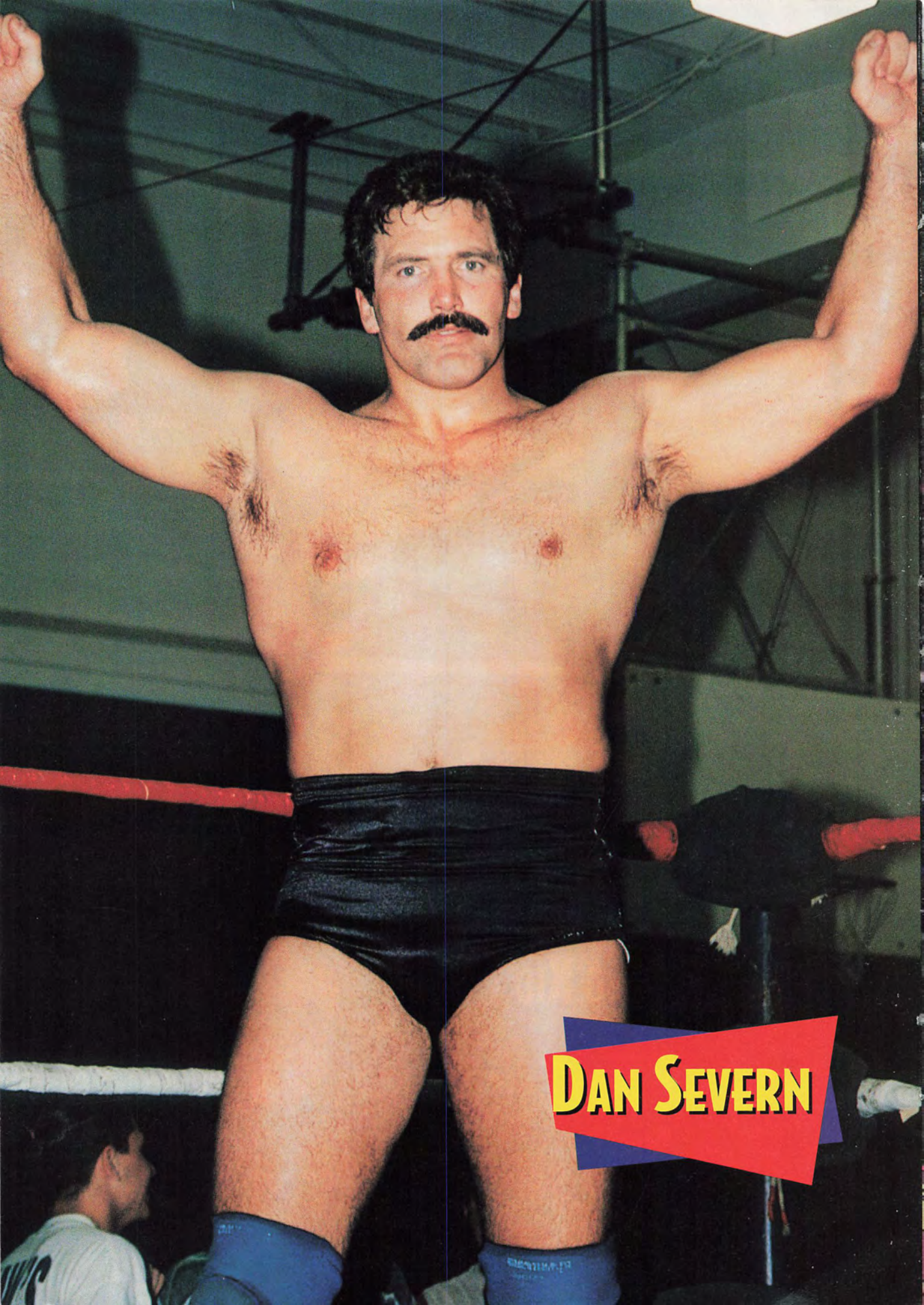
CHRISTOPHER

BRIAN



A full-page photograph of a professional wrestling match. Skip, a large wrestler with a beard and mustache, is in a defensive crouch, wearing a black singlet with red trim and a black knee pad. He is being attacked by The Inferno Kid, who is wearing red trunks with a blue triangle and blue knee-high socks. The Inferno Kid is performing a move, possibly a powerbomb or a similar high-impact maneuver, as Skip is being lifted or thrown. The background shows a crowd of spectators in a wrestling arena.

**SKIP
VS.
THE INFERNO KID**



DAN SEVERN

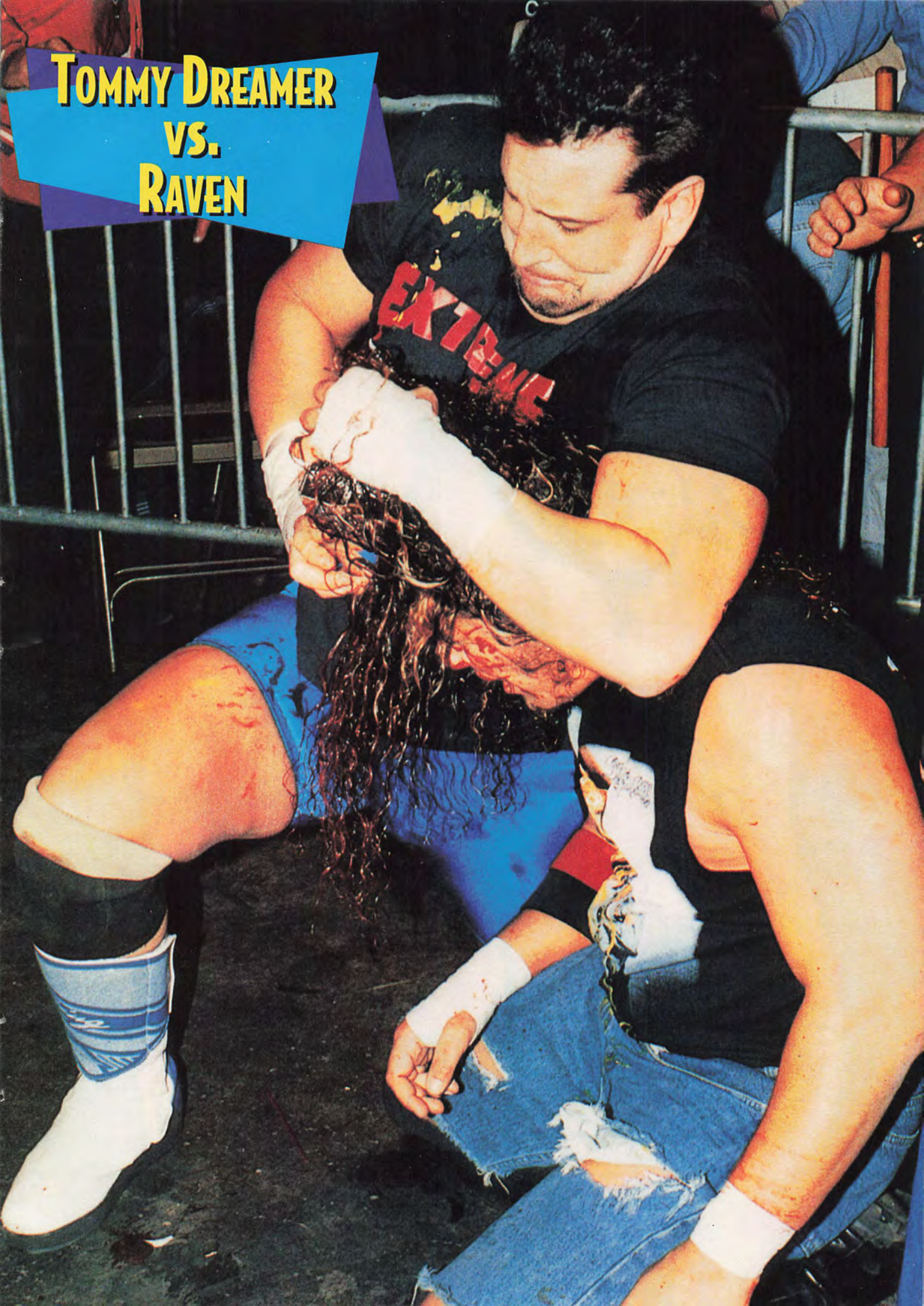
**REY MISTERIO JR.
VS.
MIKEY WHIPWRECK**

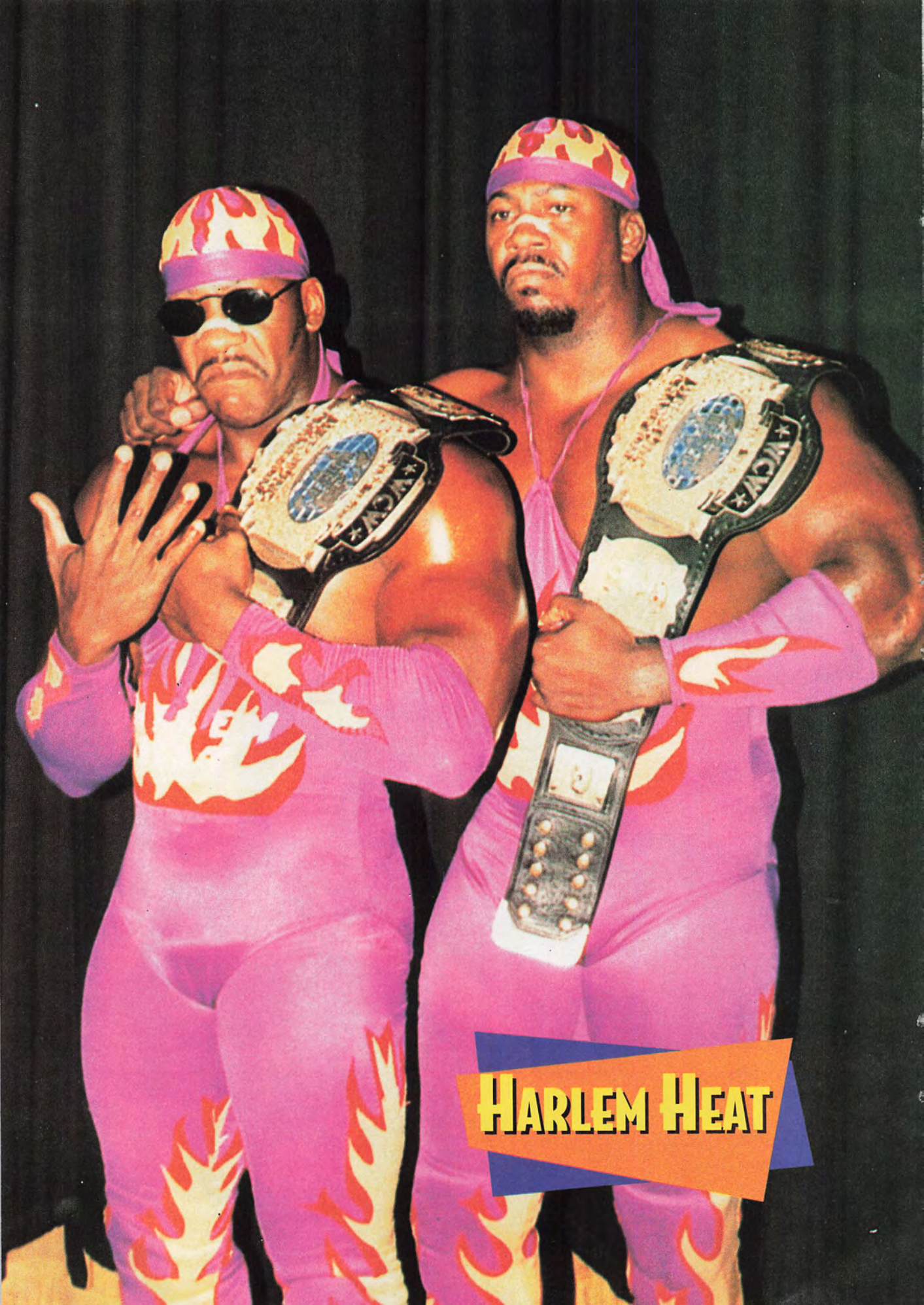


**AHMED
JOHNSON**



**TOMMY DREAMER
VS.
RAVEN**





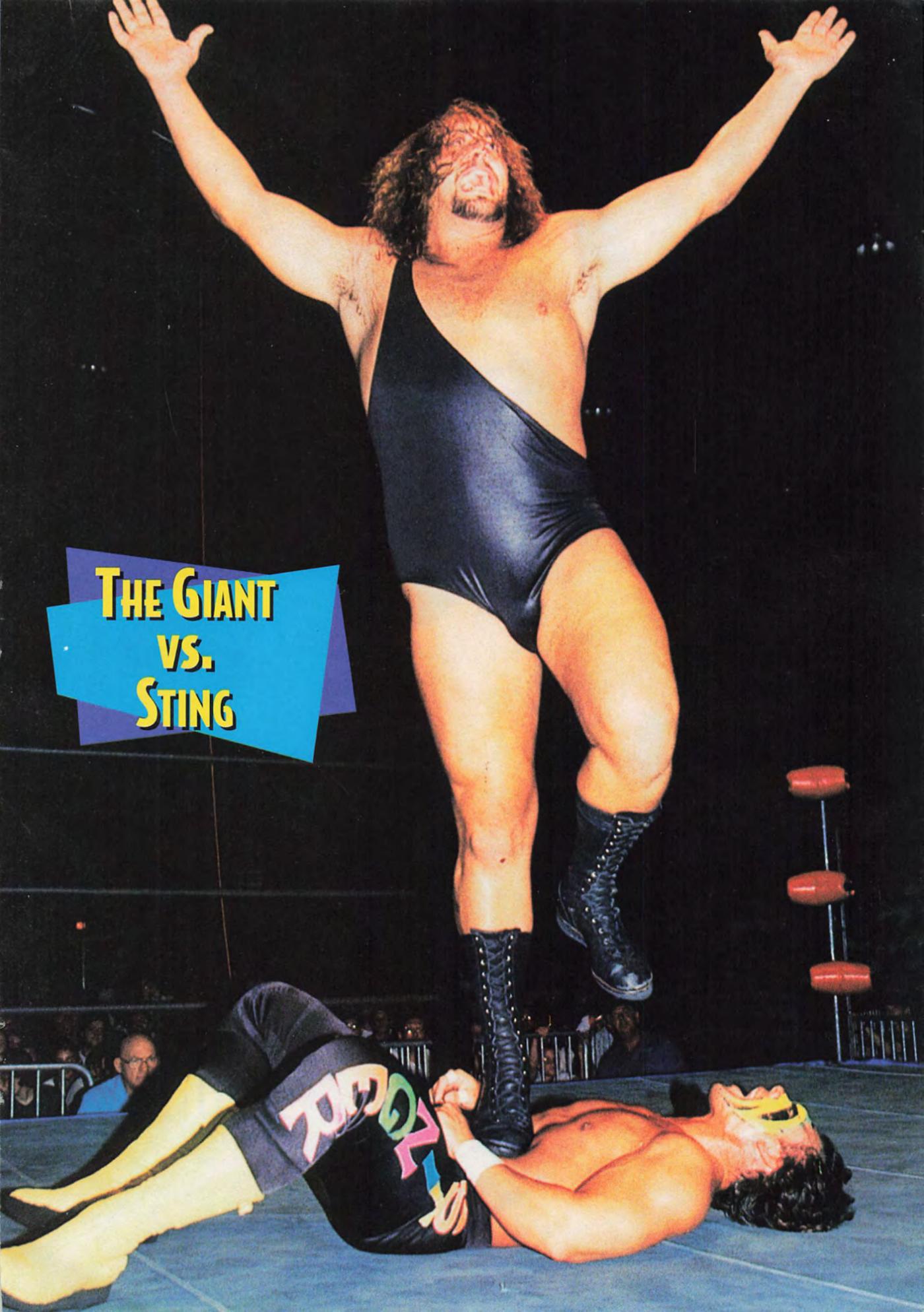
HARLEM HEAT

**DAVEY BOY SMITH
VS.
BRET HART**

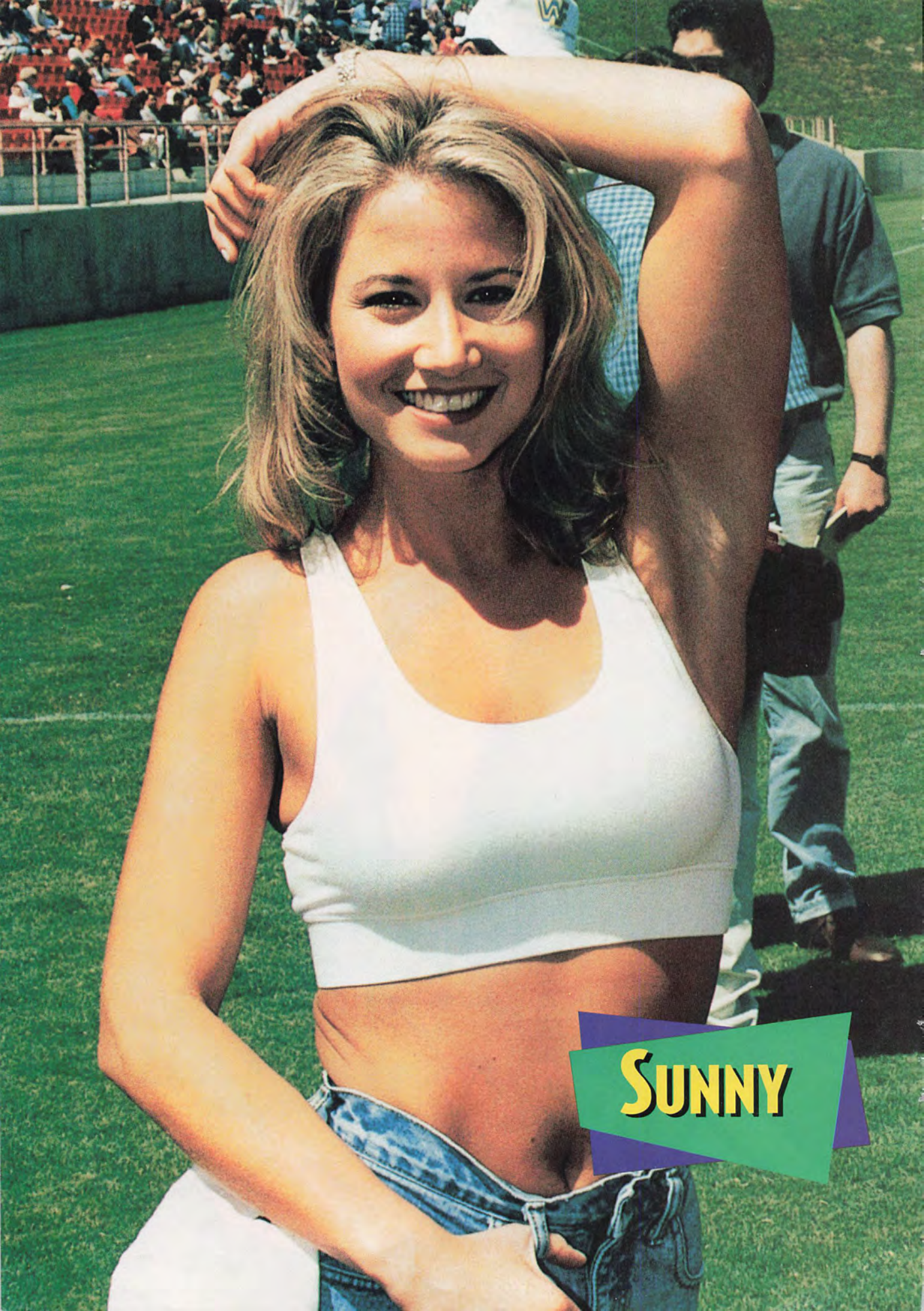




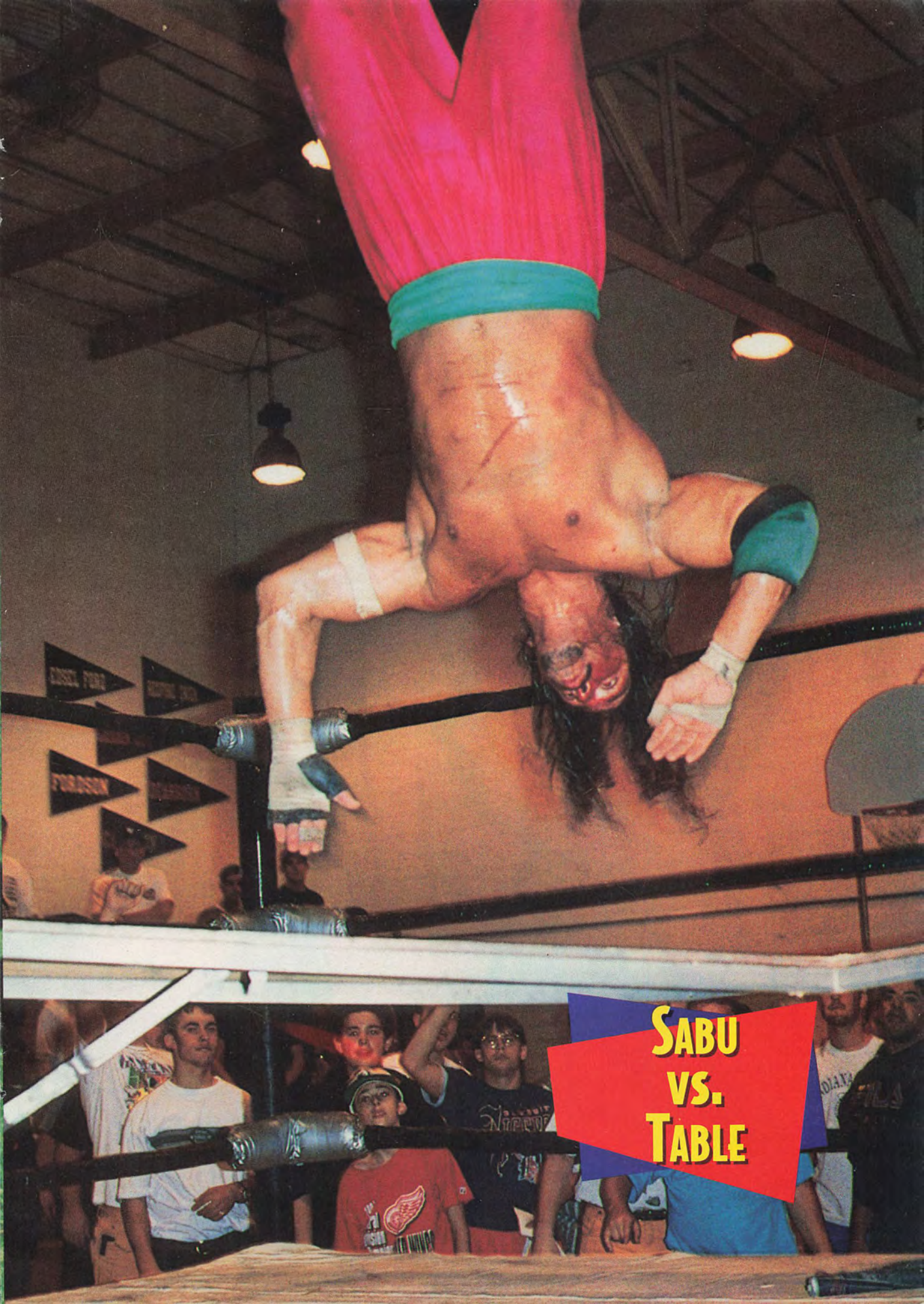
MISS TEXAS



**THE GIANT
VS.
STING**



SUNNY



**SABU
VS.
TABLE**



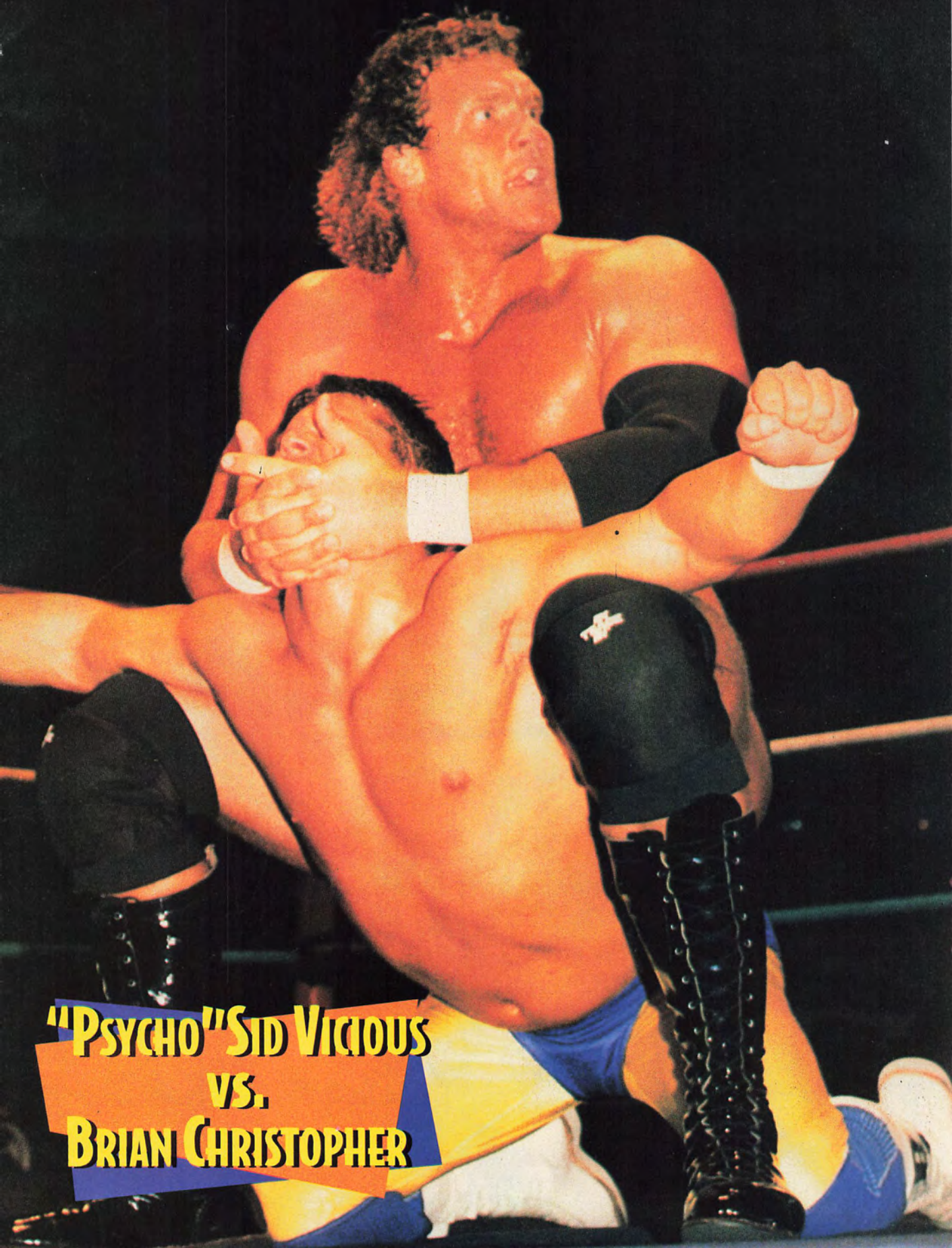
CHRIS BENOIT

**GOLDUST
VS.
SAVIO VEGA**



**BIG VAN
VADER**





**"PSYCHO" SID VICIOUS
VS.
BRIAN CHRISTOPHER**

KONNAN

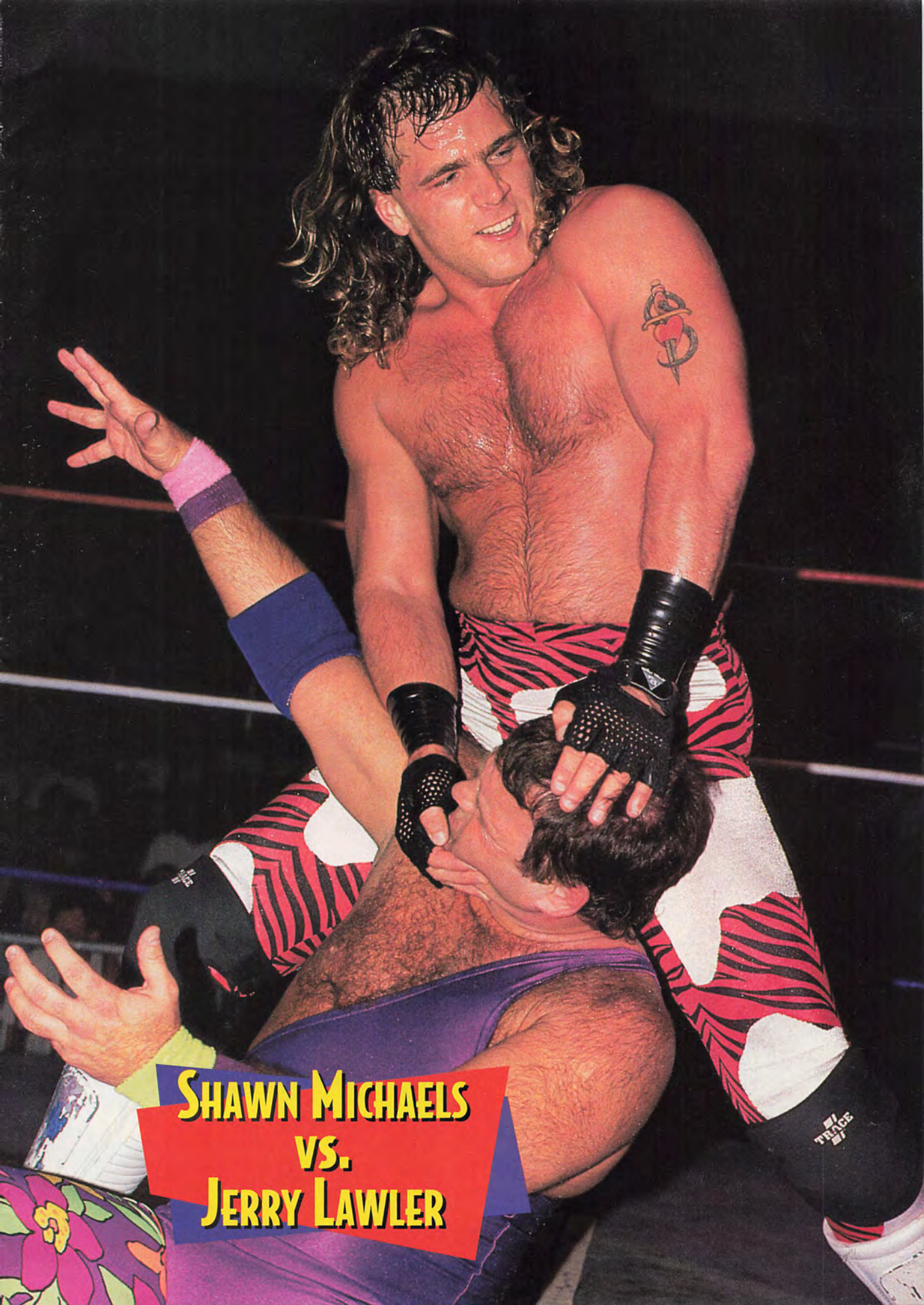


**SHANE DOUGLAS
VS.
MIKEY WHIPWRECK**

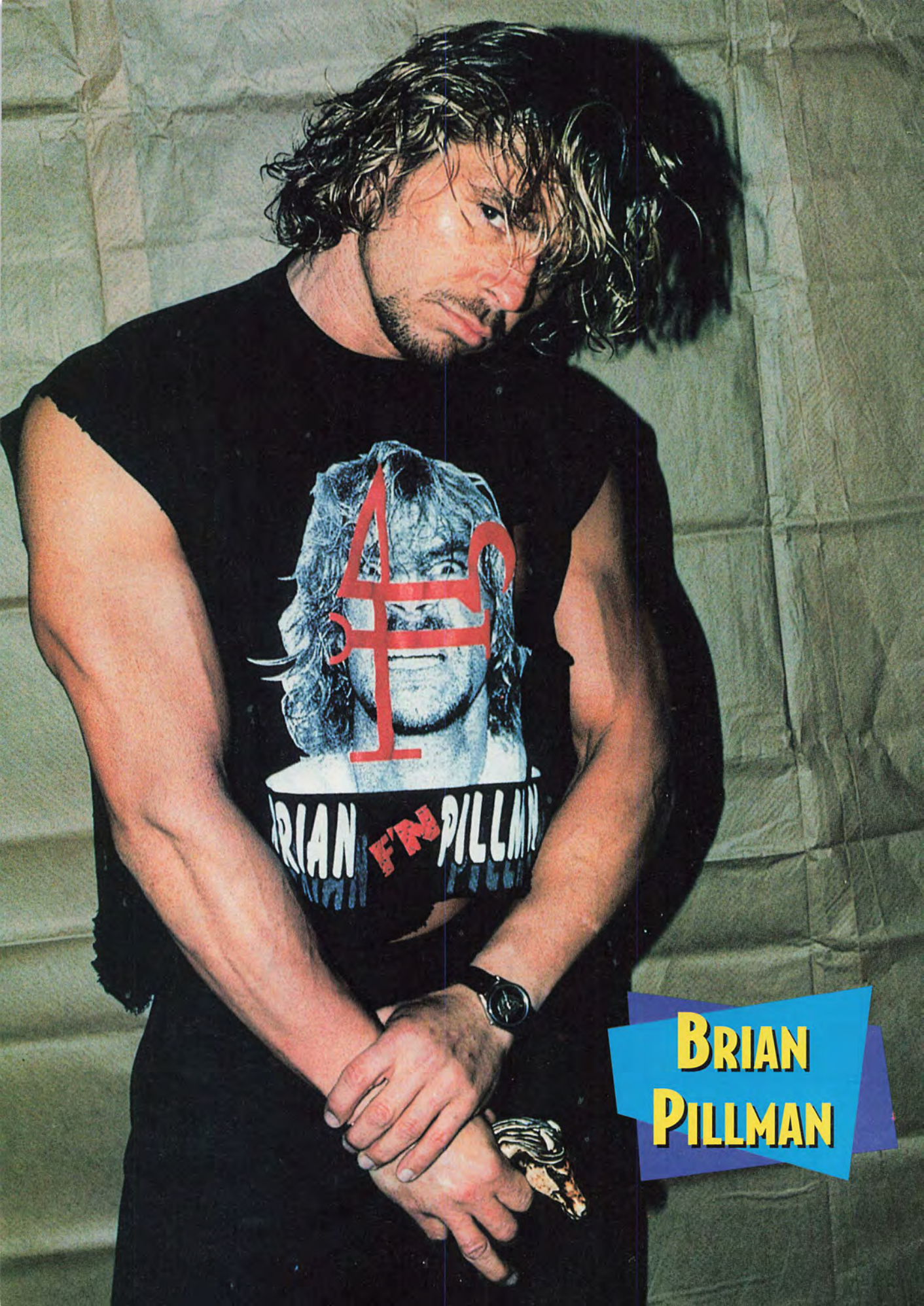


KEVIN NASH





**SHAWN MICHAELS
VS.
JERRY LAWLER**



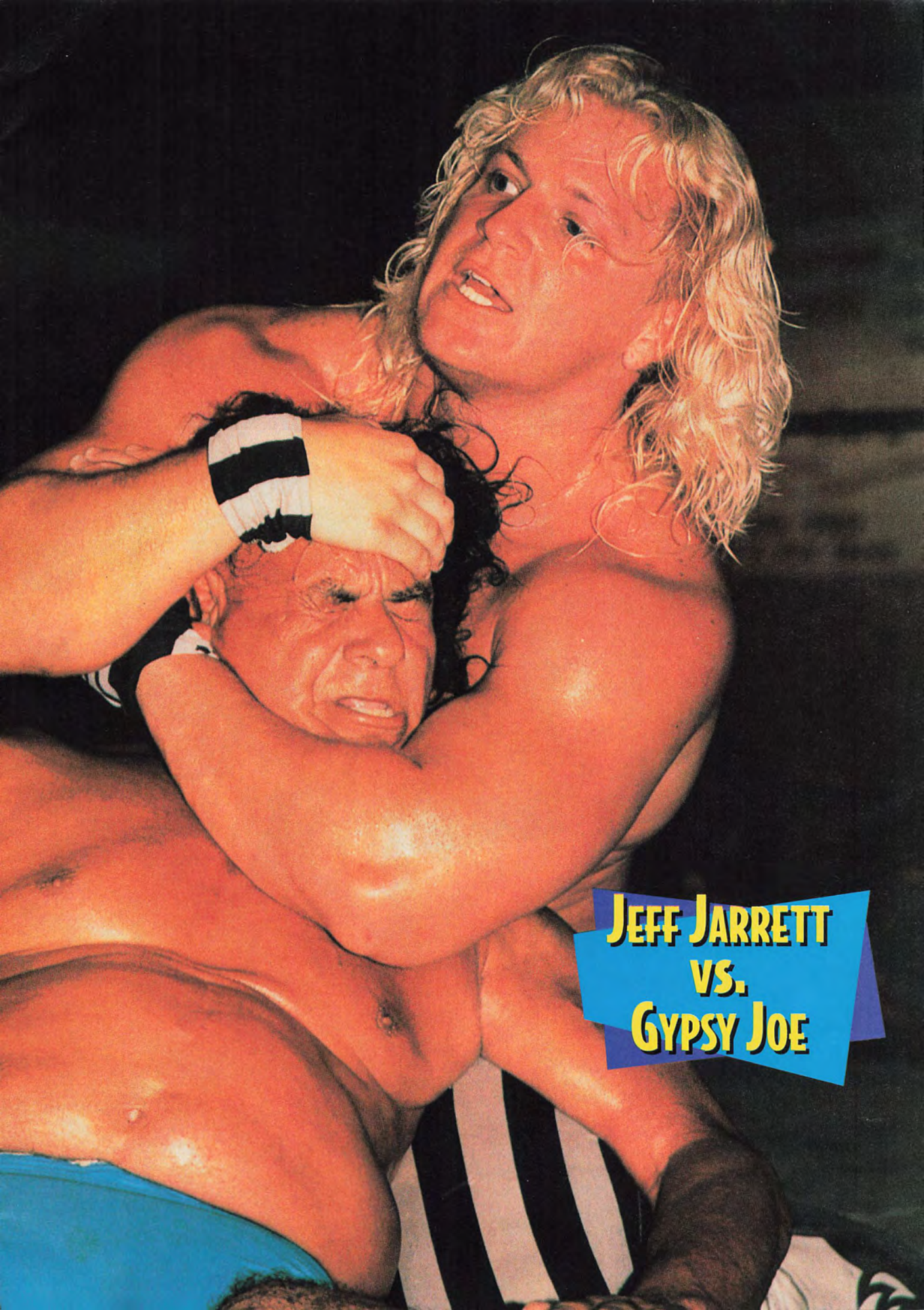
**BRIAN
PILLMAN**



**RICK & SCOTT STEINER
VS.
DANCES WITH DUDLEY**

STING





**JEFF JARRETT
VS.
GYPSY JOE**

SAVIO VEGA



**SCOTT HALL
VS.
JERRY LAWLER**



A full-page portrait of Hulk Hogan. He is wearing a black headband, a black tank top, and black gloves. He has a goatee and is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. His right arm is flexed, showing his bicep. The background is a solid dark blue. In the upper right corner, there is a yellow and orange graphic element containing the text "HULK HOGAN".

HULK HOGAN

BACK ISSUES OF

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February 1987/Stories include: Hogan-Piper-Orndorff, Taylor, Flair.

April 1987/Stories include: Windham, Steamboat, Ellering, Duggan.

December 1987/Stories include: Freebirds, Rhodes, Magnum, Savage, Perez.

March 1988/Stories include: Bigelow, Adams, Koloff, Honky Tonk, Freebirds.

April 1988/Stories include: Luger-Flair, Warrior, Andre-Hogan-DiBiase.

June 1988/Stories include: Warriors, Savage, R&R Express, Baby Doll.

October 1988/Stories include: Megapowers-Megabucks, Horsemen, Lawler.

November 1988/Stories include: Rhodes, Kerry, Luger, Muraco, Freebirds.

December 1988/Stories include: Powers of Pain, Ultimate, Flair, Piper.

March 1989/Stories include: Hennig, Midnights, Fuller & Golden, Ultimate.

May 1989/Stories include: Hogan, Steiner, Morton, Bad Co., Taylor.

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December 1989/Stories include: Rhodes, Flair, Hogan-Zeus, Embry.

January 1990/Stories include: Hogan, Sting-Flair, Roberts-DiBiase.

April 1990/Stories include: Starrcade '89, Ultimate, Rhodes, Sawyer.

June 1990/Stories include: Sting, Saito-Zbyszko, Earthquake, Ultimate.

July 1990/Stories include: Steiners, Sting, Warrior & Hogan, Earthquake.

August 1990/Stories include: Luger-Flair, Hogan, Warrior, Taylor.

September 1990/Stories include: Hogan, Duggan, JYD, Adams, Horsemen.

October 1990/Stories include: Sting, Legion of Doom, Bushwhackers, Gigante.

November 1990/Stories include: Flair, Hogan, Vicious, Slaughter, Orients.

December 1990/Stories include: Hogan, Sting, Kerry, Cornette, Zbyszko.

January 1991/Stories include: LOD, Adams, Steiners, Lawler-Funk.

February 1991/Stories include: Taylor, Hogan, Martel, Sting.

March 1991/Stories include: Hogan-Earthquake, Roberts-Martel, Sting.

April 1991/Stories include: Flair-Sting, Steiners, Piper, Zbyszko, Slaughter.

May 1991/Stories include: Savage-Warrior, Steiners, Sting, Virgil.

June 1991/Stories include: Steiners, LOD, Koloff, I-C belt, Dundees.

July 1991/Stories include: Hogan, Virgil, Nastys, Steiners, Spivey.

September 1991/Stories include: Justice-Hogan, Hyatt, Rude, Hennig.

October 1991/Stories include: Savage & Liz, Hogan & Warrior, Luger.

November 1991/Stories include: Hogan-Savage, Luger, Flair, War Games.

January 1992/Stories include: Sting, Freebirds, Hart, Rhodes, Rotundo.

May 1992/Stories include: Justice-Hogan, Liger, Gilbert, Repo Man.

June 1992/Stories include: Sting, Hogan, Race, Bagwell, Atlas.

August 1992/Stories include: Savage-Flair, Jack-Badd, Christopher, LOD.

September 1992/Stories include: War Games, Hogan, Vader, Kamala.

November 1992/Stories include: Flair, Warrior, Vader, top rope rule.

March 1993/Stories include: Michaels, Koloff, Windham-Rhodes.

June 1993/Stories include: Doink, Vader-Sting, Hart, Steiners, Lawler.

July 1993/Stories include: Bravo, Gonzales, Bulldog, Ramon, Arn.

August 1993/Stories include: Hogan-Yokozuna, Hart, Christopher.

September 1993/Stories include: Steiners, Slamboree, Ramon, Sting & Smith.

October 1993/Stories include: SummerSlam, Money Inc., Vader-Vicious.

November 1993/Stories include: Bodies, Jannetty, Rude-Flair, Hogan, Luger.

December 1993/Stories include: Fyitch, Austin, Luger, Yokozuna, Sting & Flair.

February 1994/Stories include: Hogan, Duggan, Doinks, Blonds, holiday wishes.

March 1994/Stories include: Nastys, Parker, Borga, 1994 predictions.

May 1994/Stories include: Flair-Rude, Hart, Luger, Morton, Heenan.

June 1994/Stories include: Steamboat, Snuka, Anthony, Bruises, Blayze.

August 1994/Stories include: Piper, Hogan, 911, Freebirds, rulebreakers.

September 1994/Stories include: Nastys, Undertaker, Flair-Steamboat.

November 1994/Stories include: DiBiase, Sting, Diesel, Cactus-Sabu.

December 1994/Stories include: Hogan, Bret, Rottens, Cactus, AAA midgets.

January 1995/Stories include: Vader, Diesel & Razor, Hart, Luger, Sabu.

February 1995/Stories include: Sting, McMahon-Lawler, Woman, Brutus-Hogan.

March 1995/Stories include: Nastys, Ramon, Tasmaniac, 1995 predictions.

May 1995/Stories include: Michaels, Mabel, Diesel, Undertaker, Hogan.

June 1995/Stories include: Hogan-Savage, Austin, Gangstas, Public Enemy.

August 1995/Stories include: Badd, Bigelow, Studd, Bubba-Sting.

September 1995/Stories include: Vicious, Flair-Hogan, Severn, Mabel.

November 1995/Stories include: Hogan, Wright, Tatanka, Backlund-Clinton.

December 1995/Stories include: Undertaker, Vader, Renegade, Gangstas-PE.

January 1996/Stories include: Norton, Vicious, Psicosis-Misterio.

February 1996/Stories include: 1996 predictions, Goldust, Sherri-Parker.

April 1996/Stories include: Diesel, Kid, Savage-Sting-Luger-Hogan.

May 1996/Stories include: Austin, Public Enemy, Vader, Sasaki, weirdness.

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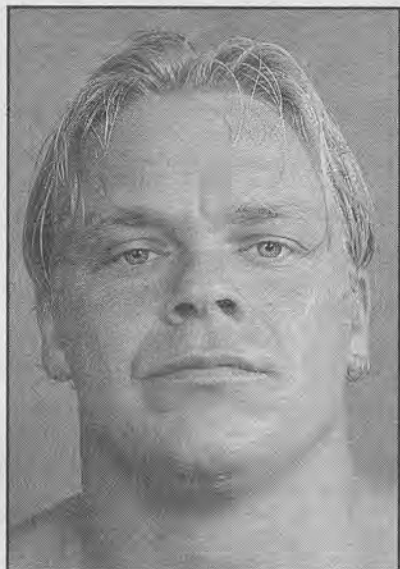
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SCOUTING REPORT:

SHANE DOUGLAS



MONTHLY RATINGS FOR 1996: No. 7 WWF (January); No. 4 WWF (February); No. 10 WWF (March); Not rated (April, May); No. 2 ECW (June-September); No. 4 ECW (October); No. 2 ECW (November); No. 4 ECW (December)

RECORD IN PAY-PER-VIEWS: Singles: 1-1; tag teams: 2-1

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Douglas has relatively good stamina and can take a match past the 20-minute mark without noticeably tiring. Since returning to ECW, however, where the matches are more intense than in other federations, Douglas has shown an ability to finish off matches in less than 10 minutes.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: He tends to be

overexuberant in the early going, which causes him to lose sight of his game plan and sometimes go in for the kill before an opponent is ready. You'd think Douglas would have learned something about patience by teaming with Rick Steamboat, but you'd be wrong.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE:

He kicks Mikey Whipwreck's butt on a regular basis. Douglas fares well against brawlers and takes great pride in offsetting wild punchers and kickers with his good mat fundamentals and outstanding array of suplexes. It's almost a matter of ego for Douglas to beat a brawler his way.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO

FACE: Although Douglas is a good scientific wrestler, he doesn't match up well with the elite technical artists such as Steve Austin and Brian Pillman. For a man who once called himself "Dean" Douglas, Shane sure isn't highly schooled in the art of subtlety.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: Quick ground moves can floor Douglas in a hurry.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: A flying clothesline from the middle or top rope. It would be the perfect accompaniment for his belly-to-belly suplex.

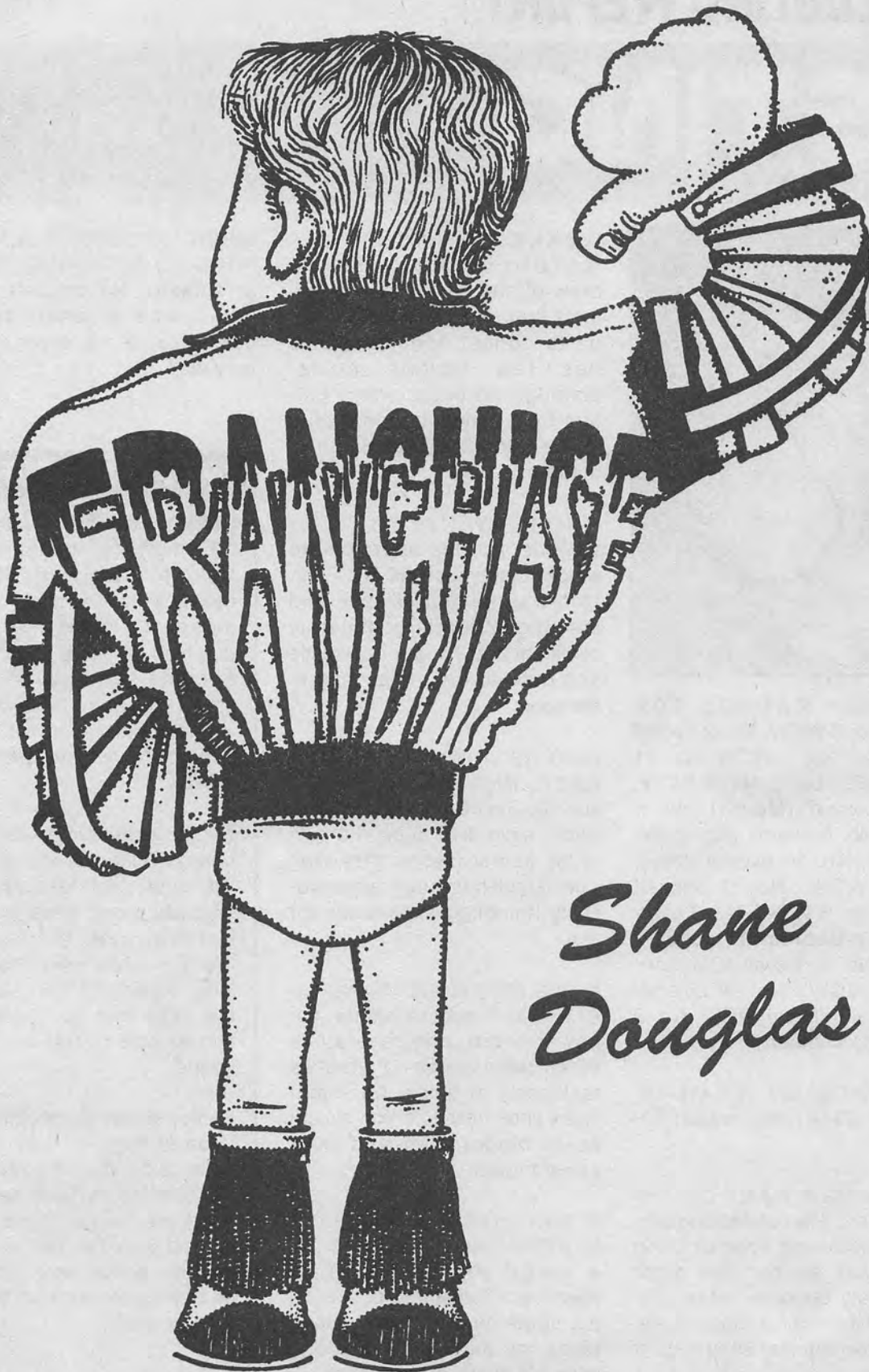
WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: Belly-to-belly suplex. Although it's not on the Steiner level, Douglas has won plenty of matches with this well-executed finisher.

OUR COMMENTS:

Publisher Stu Saks: "Arrogance is getting Douglas nowhere. He had his best days when he was teaming with Rick Steamboat, who really taught him a lot. A little humility would serve him well, but he does seem at home in ECW."

Senior Writer Dave Rosenbaum: "It was funny when Douglas threw down the NWA heavyweight belt when he won it in tournament back in 1994. I think he gained a lot of fans with that move. Right now, I think Douglas is where he belongs; he's one of the top men in his federation."

Contributing Editor Liz Hunter: "You take one look at Douglas and you think he's the all-American boy, but he's not like that at all. Downsize the ego, Shane."



*Shane
Douglas*

SCOUTING REPORT:

STING



MONTHLY RATINGS FOR 1996: No. 3 WCW, No. 2 overall (January); No. 7 WCW, No. 11 overall (February); No. 6 WCW, No. 6 overall (March); No. 5 WCW, No. 6 overall (April); No. 6 WCW, No. 10 overall (May); No. 6 WCW, No. 9 overall (June); No. 3 WCW, No. 2 overall (July-September); No. 3 WCW, No. 7 overall (October); No. 3 WCW, No. 5 overall (November); No. 4 WCW, No. 9 overall (December)

RECORD ON PAY-PER-VIEWS: Singles: 20-9-1; tag teams: 13-2-2

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: His outstanding aerobic conditioning enables Sting to outlast all but the most supremely conditioned of athletes. The longer a match lasts, the better chance Sting has of winning.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Sting likes to draw off the crowd's energy to start fast, then use his stamina to outlast opponents. He has few trouble spots, although he occasionally suffers from concentration lapses in the 8-to-12-minute range of matches.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE: Wrestlers of his approximate weight class such as Ric Flair. Men who rely on science and cunning. Sting is completely confident that he can outwrestle and outleap any other man in the sport.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE: Big, hulking bruisers such as The Giant and Big Van Vader have dealt Sting the bulk of his career losses. Wrestling The Giant has been an especially humbling experience for him.

/MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: The choke-slam, the power bomb, and others like them. Because Sting wrestles recklessly at times, he sometimes finds himself in the clutches of bigger men and their power moves.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: A DDT or piledriver. Something unexpected, something powerful. Sting relies too much on grace and style. He needs more impact.

WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: "Stinger splash." He doesn't often use it as a finisher, but he uses it to set up other moves very well.

OUR COMMENTS:

Senior Editor Bill Apter:

"The media sometimes have trouble criticizing Sting because he's such a forthright and personable individual. He's probably the most genuine good guy in the sport, but sometimes that works against him. He is a target for every rulebreaker in WCW."

Senior Writer Dave Rosenbaum:

"Sting has won three WCW World titles, but he probably should have won a fourth by now. The fact is that Sting has never had a long, dominant WCW World title reign that would stamp him as one of the all-time greats."

Senior Writer Eddie Ellner:

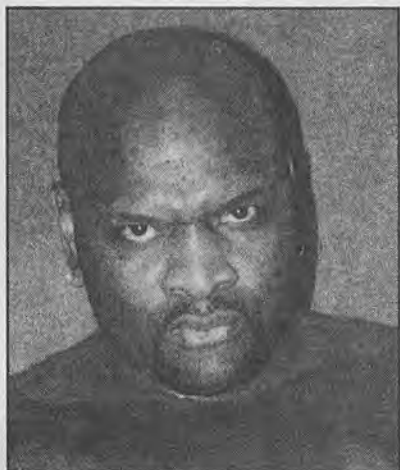
"Sometimes I get the impression that Sting lacks the killer instinct because he loves wrestling so much. He doesn't want his matches to end, so he lets them continue until he loses or, at best, doesn't win."

Sting



SCOUTING REPORT:

AHMED JOHNSON



MONTHLY RATINGS FOR 1996:

Not rated (January); No. 6 WWF, No. 13 overall (February); No. 7 WWF, No. 14 overall (March); No. 5 WWF (April); No. 6 WWF (May); No. 5 WWF, No. 11 overall (June); No. 11 WWF (July, August); No. 6 WWF, No. 15 overall (September); No. 2 WWF, No. 3 overall (October); No. 2 WWF, No. 4 overall (November); Not rated (December)

RECORD IN PAY-PER-VIEWS:

Singles: 3-0; tag teams: 1-2

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES:

The classic middle man. You'll find that just about all of Johnson's matches last from 10 to 15 minutes. It's the perfect length for a 6'4", 255-pound muscular brawler who sometimes needs a little time to gear up, but is not in outstanding aerobic condition.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES:

Johnson has never wrestled a marathon, so it's hard to

tell how he'd do in a 20-plus-minute match. We have noticed, however, that he has struggled in tag team and six-man matches, leading us to believe that he doesn't like wrestling in short bursts and therefore could be vulnerable in the opening five minutes.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE:

Brawlers. Johnson is extremely confident that he can outlast and outbrawl anybody in the world. He has done some of his best work against Goldust, whom he beat for the WWF Intercontinental title, and Big Van Vader, whom he humbled twice in one week.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE:

A scientific wrestler with stamina. Johnson has beaten Jeff Jarrett, but he would be in trouble against him if Jarrett could hold him off for more than 20 minutes. We suspect that a smart wrestler would be able to avoid Johnson's feared "Pearl River Plunge" and get him frustrated enough to score the victory. Johnson tends to get bent out of shape, and when he does, the rest of his game goes with it.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO:

Other than the moves Goldust puts on him—which he finds absolutely infuriating—Johnson's most vulnerable to aerial moves because he's not sure how to counter them. Should he duck? Should he try to get out of the way? Johnson must find a way to counterwrestle against aerial artists.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: A powerful elbow-drop to go with his spinebuster and "Pearl River Plunge."

WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: "Pearl River Plunge." It looks like a power bomb and has the same effect. The "Plunge" almost always leads to victory for Ahmed.

OUR COMMENTS:

Managing Editor Brandi Mankiewicz:

"Johnson is one of the most exciting wrestlers to come along in a long time. Of all the 'New Generation' stars in the WWF, he might be the one with the most long-term potential."

Senior Writer Dave Rosenbaum:

"Johnson has one glaring weakness: his temper. If he can channel his anger properly, he's fine, but he has to remain focused to be effective."

Contributing Editor Liz Hunter:

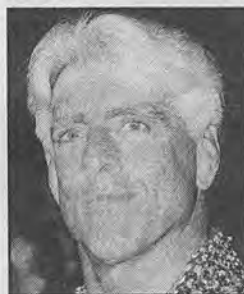
"Johnson seemed to come out of nowhere, and he has really captured the imagination of the wrestling public. I still think he has a long way to go in honing his repertoire and expanding his skills, but I think we're looking at a future megastar."



Ahmed Johnson

SCOUTING REPORT:

THE FOUR HORSEMEN



for the crowd or all four of them strutting around the ring flashing four fingers, the Horsemen need a few minutes to get into gear.

WHO THEY WANT TO FACE: The Horsemen are such a multitasking group that it doesn't matter who they face. Flair has great stamina and can match any tactician in the world. Arn is a world-class brawler. Benoit has tremendous all-around talent. McMichael is a tough brawler. Bring them all on, especially the sci-

entific teams.

WHO THEY DON'T WANT TO FACE: The Horsemen operate on the premise of fear, so opponents who don't fear them have won half the battle. Combination brawler/tactician teams can pose a problem for the Horsemen.

MOVE THEY'RE MOST VULNERABLE TO: Sneak-attacks, and it's been like that through the years. The Horsemen are so busy plotting their next move that they often don't realize other teams are plotting, too. Operating less on this one-track mentality would be greatly beneficial to the Horsemen, but there's really no teaching old horses new tricks.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO THEIR REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: A really big man or a manager. Wouldn't The Giant

look great on their side? McMichael has a lot of potential, but Flair, Anderson, and even Benoit realize their team lacks size.

WHEN WRESTLING THEM, BE SURE TO AVOID THEIR: Corner. The Horsemen revel in double-teaming and cheating. Wander into their corner and prepare to get physically and mentally abused. It's a Horsemen tradition. Stay out of their cave!

OUR COMMENTS:

Publisher Stu Saks: "The Horsemen are a part of wrestling history, and I don't think they'll ever go away. They've perfected the art of double-, triple-, and quadruple-teaming, and they're one of the few groups in the world working under the all for one, one for all philosophy."

Senior Writer Eddie Ellner: "The best version ever of the Horsemen was Flair, Arn, Tully Blanchard, and Ole Anderson, and I don't think that combination will ever be matched. The current group is obviously formidable, but there are some weaknesses, and we've seen them."

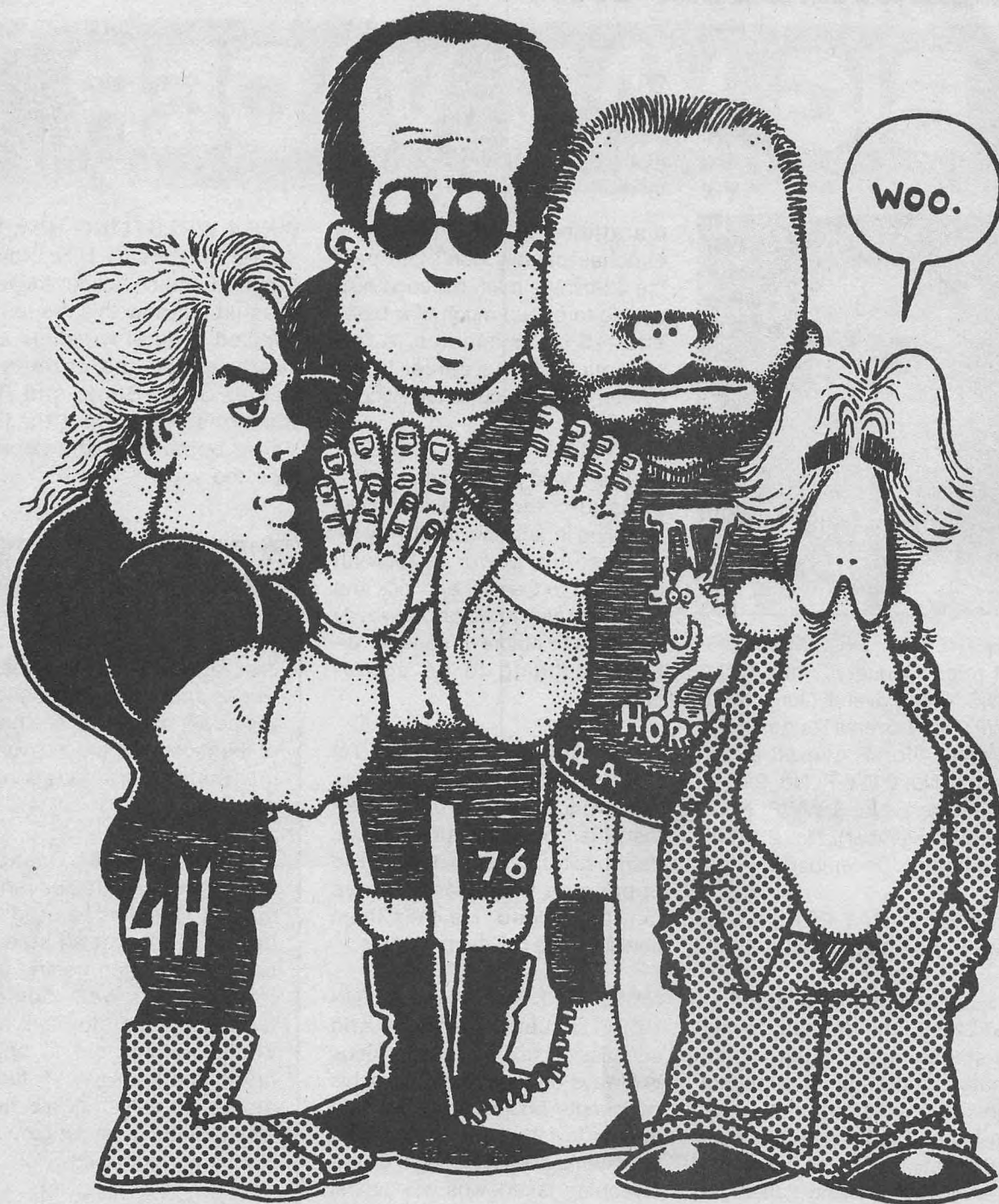
Senior Writer Dave Rosenbaum: "McMichael's presence makes this edition of the Horsemen questionable. I don't know if he's totally committed to the group."

MONTHLY RATINGS FOR 1996:
Unrated as a team

RECORD IN PAY-PER-VIEWS:
Have never wrestled as a complete unit on a pay-per-view.

STRONGEST PART OF THEIR MATCHES: The Horsemen have historically been a group of well-conditioned all-around wrestlers who don't mind if a match lasts 20 or 30 minutes. Steve McMichael's presence doesn't help matters, because his stamina is unproven, but the Horsemen are still so talented with Ric Flair, Arn Anderson, and Chris Benoit that they can maintain quality deep into a match.

WEAKEST PART OF THEIR MATCHES: The Horsemen tend to joke around early and do everything but wrestle in the first five minutes. Whether it's Flair posing



The Four Horsemen

SCOUTING REPORT:

BIG VAN VADER



MONTHLY RATINGS FOR 1996:

Not rated (January-June); No. 6 WWF, No. 15 overall (July); No. 5 WWF, No. 7 overall (August); No. 8 WWF, No. 7 overall (September); No. 6 WWF, No. 9 overall (October); No. 3 WWF, No. 6 overall (November), No. 2 WWF, No. 6 overall (December)

RECORD IN PAY-PER-VIEWS:

Singles: 12-7; tag teams: 4-3

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES:

The late-early to middle stages, about three to nine minutes. Vader's at his strongest, stamina hasn't become a factor, and his opponent isn't at a peak concentration point of the match. When you're wrestling Vader, you must keep your guard up at all times.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES:

The longer they last, the weaker Vader gets. Davey Boy Smith, a much smaller wrestler than Vader, did well against him in a series of mini-

marathons in WCW; Vader's matches usually don't last past the 20-minute mark because he's unable to put up much of a battle after 15 or 16 minutes. A few exceptions came earlier in his career, when he outlasted Sting.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE:

Brawlers who specialize in hand-to-hand combat. Vader loves wrestling in a clinch. That way he can use his power to toss an opponent to the mat and kick and punch his way to victory. Anybody who tries to outbrawl Vader is virtually begging to be power-bombed.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE:

Quick scientific wrestlers who work in short bursts, strike fast, then back up, strike again, then back up. Vader doesn't like opponents who aren't always moving forward. He calls them cowards. We call them winners.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO:

Leg takedowns and submission holds. Vader's focus is always on the upper part of his opponents' bodies; sometimes he seems to forget that he and his opponents even have legs. Quick, sweeping takedowns will almost always fell him.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS:

A dropkick. Imagine: You've backed off from Vader, fearing his power bomb. A dropkick backed by 450 pounds of thunderous energy would be lethal.

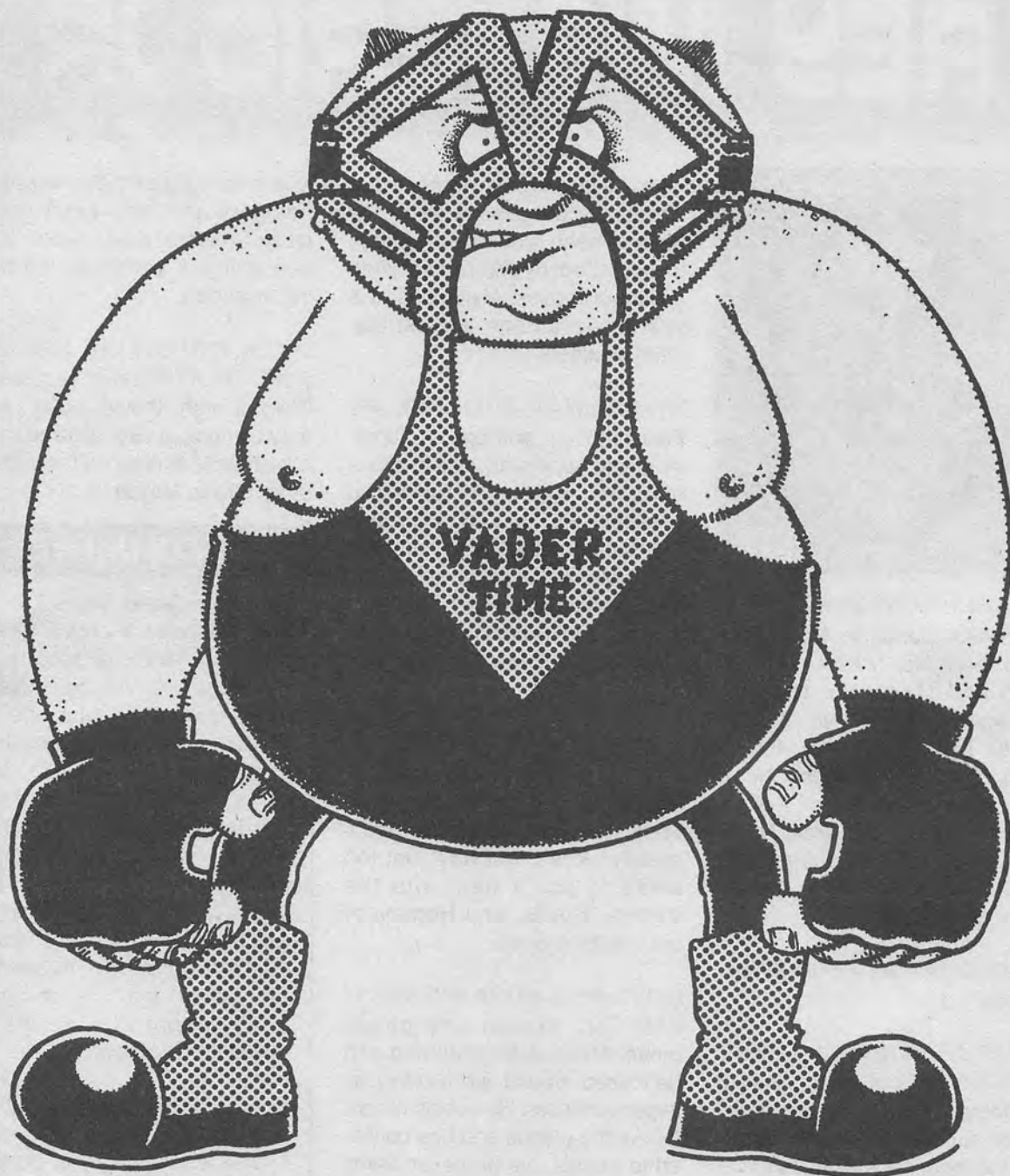
WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: Power bomb, of course. Vader loves to boast about how this move has crippled several wrestlers and nearly ended the careers of Cactus Jack, Sting, and Ron Simmons. Watch out for that Vader bomb from the second rope, too.

OUR COMMENTS:

Publisher Stu Saks: "Wrestlers still shake in fear when Vader approaches the ring. His power bomb remains one of the most dangerous finishing maneuvers I've ever seen."

Managing Editor Brandi Mankiewicz: "Vader isn't quite as feared as he used to be, and I think it all stems back from Hogan getting up from his power bomb. Everybody used to think he was unbeatable, but not anymore. The Vader WWF fans are seeing isn't invincible, but he is still the most dangerous man in the federation."

Contributing Editor Liz Hunter: "Vader relies too much on his managers—first Harley Race, now Jim Cornette, which is surprising because he has always struck me as being fiercely independent."



Big Van Vader

SCOUTING REPORT:

REY MISTERIO JR.



MONTHLY RATINGS FOR 1996:

No. 5 AAA (January); No. 3 AAA (February); No. 5 AAA (March); No. 3 AAA (April); No. 10 ECW, No. 4 AAA (May); No. 5 AAA (June); No. 9 ECW, No. 4 AAA (July); No. 3 AAA (August); No. 6 AAA (September); No. 2 AAA (October); No. 10 overall, No. 5 WCW, No. 2 AAA (November); No. 2 AAA, No. 6 WCW, No. 11 overall (December)

RECORD IN PAY-PER-VIEWS:

Singles: 1-1

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES:

This mini-dynamo with incredible scientific and aerial ability subscribes to the theory that the longer a match lasts, the smaller his opponents get. Energy drains. Size means less. The elephant is big but weakened, while the mosquito still has his bite.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES:

The early going against much larger opponents,

when their size makes them especially dangerous and they haven't been weakened enough to be felled by Misterio's wide variety of moves. Misterio is at a vast disadvantage against big, fresh wrestlers.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE:

Ric Flair or Sting, perhaps. A superstar, any superstar, just to prove himself against full-sized wrestlers. But that doesn't mean the 140-pound Misterio can beat them. Misterio is close to unbeatable against mid-sized wrestlers with limited repertoires, people such as Hacksaw Duggan and The Booty Man.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO

FACE: Huge wrestlers. Misterio knows that you can't beat down a brick wall with dropkicks. He's greatly skilled, but he's just too small to put a dent into the Vaders, Giants, and Hogans of the wrestling world.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERA-

BLE TO: Almost any power move. Misterio is small and can be tossed around like a pillow by larger wrestlers. He avoids clinches like the plague and has confided to friends that he never wants to wrestle a power-bomber.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A

HUGE PLUS: About 20 or 30 pounds. Not too much weight, because then Misterio would lose some of his agility and speed. But 140 pounds is just too small for

Misterio to compete against heavyweights and even some cruiserweights. Sure, power isn't everything in wrestling, but neither is speed.

WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS:

Dropkicks. They're high, they're quick, and they come right after another, as if Misterio has springs on the bottom of his shoes. Maybe he does.

OUR COMMENTS:

Editor-in-Chief Dave Len-

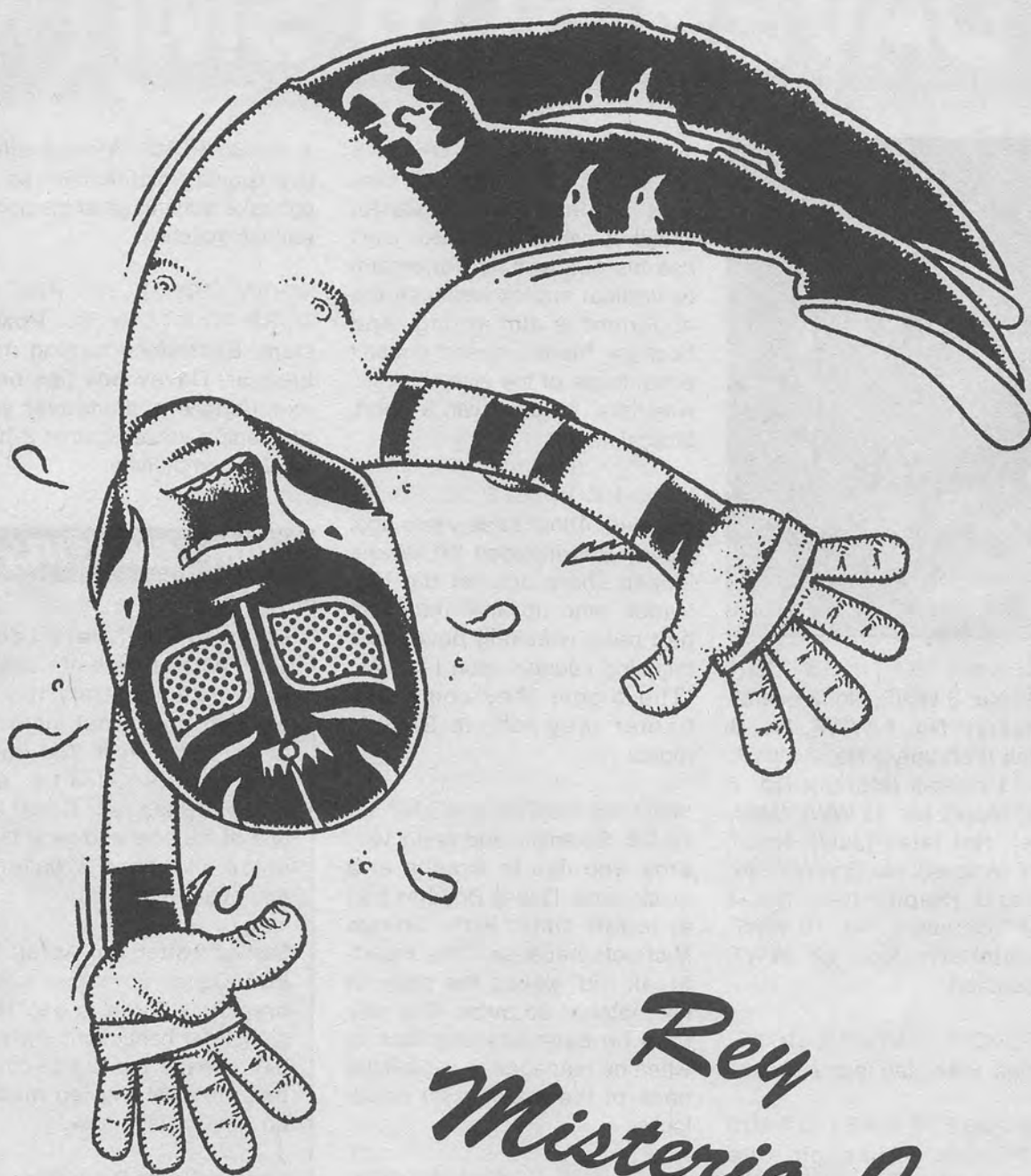
ker: "Misterio is small, he's exciting, and he gets my blood rushing. You can't look away for second when he's wrestling, because you might miss two or three moves."

Senior Editor Bill Apter:

"Wrestlers like Misterio come along once in a lifetime, if you're lucky. He's so exciting and has thrilled so many fans that it really doesn't matter if he never wins a major heavyweight title. He has succeeded at his craft."

Senior Writer Dave Rosen-

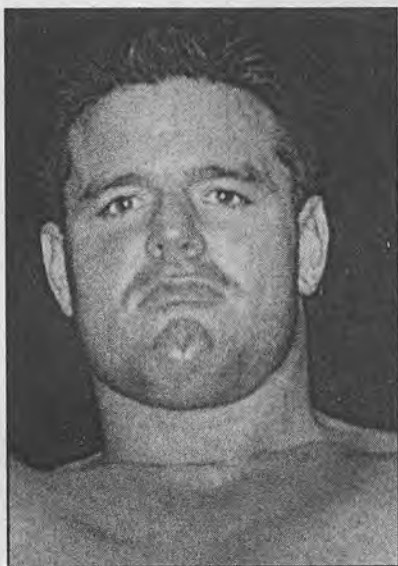
baum: "Misterio has proven to the world that you don't have to be big like The Giant or Hulk Hogan to succeed in this sport. On the other hand, you do have to be a little bit bigger to succeed as a heavyweight, and Misterio is doomed to a career in the lowest weight classes."



*Rey
Mysterio Jr.*

SCOUTING REPORT:

DAVEY BOY SMITH



MONTHLY RATINGS FOR 1996: No. 3 WWF, No. 8 overall (January); No. 4 WWF, No. 8 overall (February); No. 3 WWF, No. 11 overall (March); No. 7 WWF (April); No. 12 WWF (May, June); Not rated (July); No. 7 WWF (August); No. 3 WWF, No. 9 overall (September); No. 4 WWF (October); No. 10 WWF (November); No. 12 WWF (December)

RECORD IN PAY-PER-VIEWS: Singles: 8-4-2; tag teams: 7-4

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Although the "British Bulldog" is a solid technical wrestler, he prefers matches that go into the 13-to-20-minute range and no longer. He has done some of his best work by coaxing larger, out-of-shape brawlers into this middle zone, then capitalizing upon their fatigue.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: The opening minutes against other powerful wrestlers, when Davey Boy can't use his outstanding powerslam or vertical suplex because the opponent is still strong. And because his top speed doesn't equal those of the elite scientific wrestlers, he can't win a short, tactical match.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE: Big men. About three years ago, Davey Boy invaded WCW and looked sharp against Big Van Vader, who up until that time had been wreaking havoc and crippling injuries upon his foes. "The bigger they come, the harder they fall" is Smith's motto.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE: Scientific and aerial wizards who like to wrestle at a quick pace. Davey Boy has had a tough time with Shawn Michaels because "The Heartbreak Kid" keeps the pace of his matches so quick. The only time he ever has any luck is when he manages to control the pace of the match with headlocks.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: Davey Boy has seen all he wants of Shawn Michaels' flying bodypress and superkick. They kept him from winning the WWF World title.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE

A HUGE PLUS: A more effective running clothesline, so he can take advantage of his power early in matches.

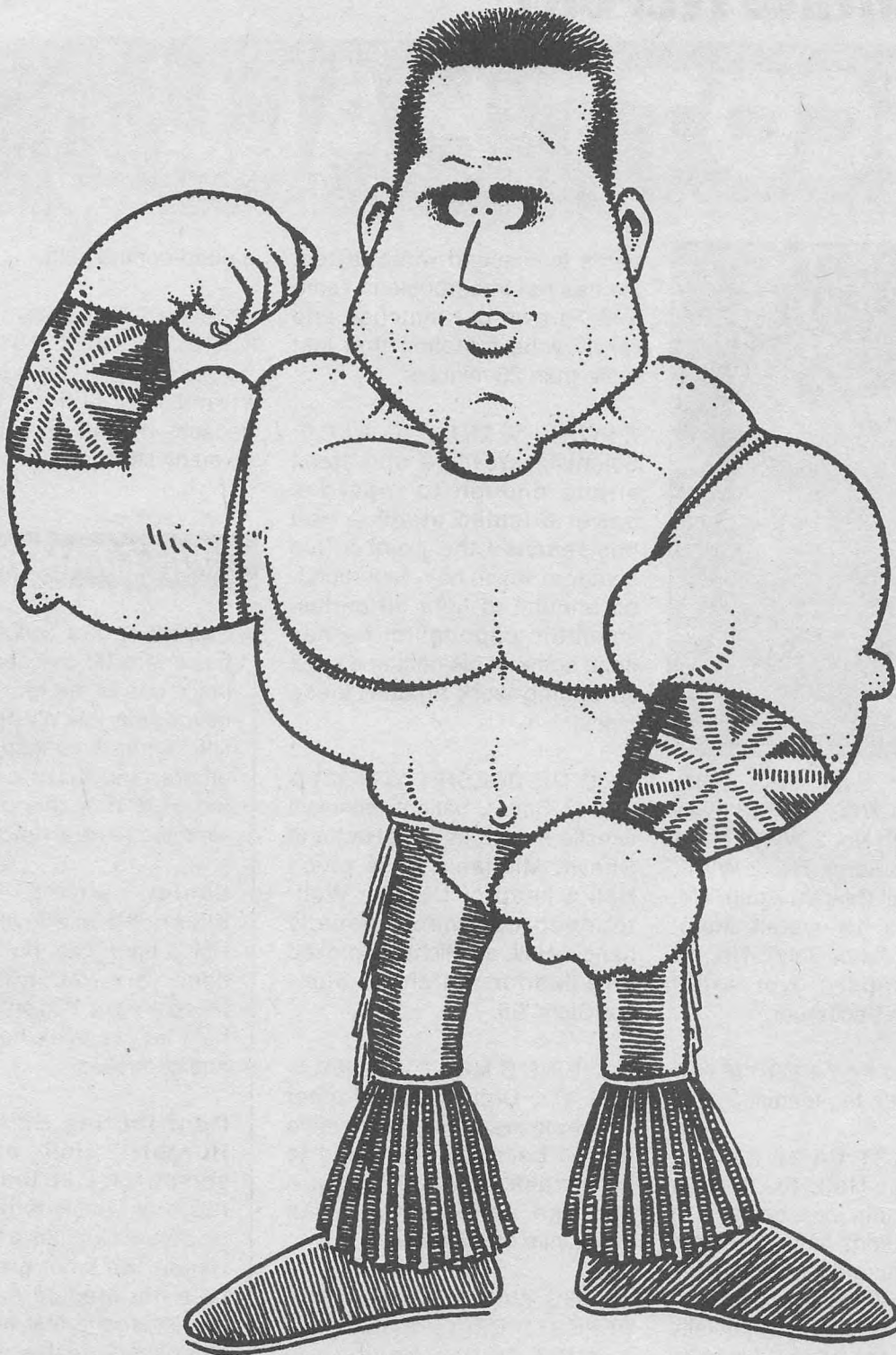
WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: Powerslam. Ever since turning rule-breaker, Davey Boy has been executing this maneuver with frightening verve against a high level of competition.

OUR COMMENTS

Editor-in-Chief Dave Lenker: "When I think of Davey Boy, I immediately think back to that great victory over Bret Hart for the Intercontinental title at SummerSlam '92. Smith is one of the best and most talented mid-sized wrestlers that ever lived."

Senior Editor Bill Apter: "I think Davey Boy's new rule-breaker attitude is bad for his career because it makes him wrestle too out-of-control. He's relying too much on Jim Cornette now."

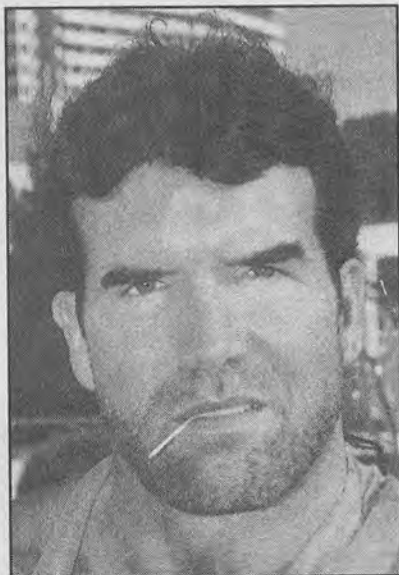
Senior Writer Dave Rosenbaum: "I still can't help but think of Davey Boy as a tag team specialist with The British Bulldogs. That's why I was surprised to see that his tag team record in pay-per-views is so mediocre."



Davey Boy Smith

SCOUTING REPORT:

SCOTT HALL



MONTHLY RATINGS FOR 1996: No. 6 WWF, No. 13 overall (January); No. 2 WWF, No. 4 overall (February); No. 2 WWF, No. 7 overall (March, April); No. 9 WWF, No. 13 overall (May); Not rated (June, July); No. 10 WWF (August); Not rated (September-December).

RECORD IN PAY-PER-VIEWS: Singles: 10-5; tag teams: 2-1-1

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Hall, the former Razor Ramon, can be lazy at times. He needs time to get into gear and usually reaches his peak when the match hits double-digits. He's then especially effective in the 10-to-15-minute range.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Although he's lazy early, Hall is strong enough to overcome his sluggishness and

tends to respond when tested. He has run into trouble in some long, drawn-out matches and rarely wins matches that last more than 25 minutes.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE: Scientific wrestlers who aren't strong enough to repel his power-oriented attacks. Hall has reached the point in his career at which he's well-rounded enough to fight off certain scientific opponents; he has done some of his best and most surprising work against these types.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE: Smart, patient technical wrestlers such as Bret Hart and Shawn Michaels have given Hall a heap of trouble. Well-rounded opponents usually handle Hall, as Michaels proved in a ladder match at SummerSlam '95.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: Dropkicks and other aerial moves. Hall is vulnerable up top because he's used to getting attacked down below. A surprise aerial assault can knock him off-balance.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: Having not added a significant move or hold to his repertoire in years, Hall could add just about anything and use it as a weapon. We suggest a variation of the figure-four leglock or another

ground-control hold.

WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: Hall's "Razor's Edge" is a sure finisher and very difficult to avoid because he can execute it from so many situations.

OUR COMMENTS:

Publisher Stu Saks: "Hall became a bit stagnant, and that's one of the reasons he never won the WWF World title. When he's inspired by others, and that's certainly the case now, his game is elevated several notches."

Senior Writer Eddie Illner: "People love giving Hall a hard time, but he has done very well in the last three years. I don't think he's lazy. I think he's cool and controlled."

Contributing Editor Liz Hunter: "Hall belongs somewhere in that wide range of wrestlers between Hacksaw Duggan and Hulk Hogan. He's not great, but he's not mediocre either. The shame is that he could have been great—could still be great—if he'd only worry less about image and more about ability."



Scott Hall

SCOUTING REPORT:

MANKIND



MONTHLY RATINGS FOR 1996:

No. 5 ECW (January, February); No. 6 ECW (March), Not rated (April); No. 7 ECW (May); No. 6 ECW (June); Not rated (July); No. 13 WWF (August); No. 15 WWF (September); No. 7 WWF (October); No. 8 WWF (November, December)

RECORD IN PAY-PER-VIEWS:

Singles: 2-4; tag teams: 1-7

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES:

Although the former Cactus Jack is an aggressive brawler who goes nonstop from the opening bell, getting hurt—and sometimes getting a glimpse of his own blood—gets him motivated and makes him a more dangerous wrestler. No long-distance wrestler, Mankind has done his most winning in the 13-to-17-minute range, especially in brutal falls-count-anywhere matches.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES:

Mankind is vulnera-

ble early because he comes into the ring without a strategy and just goes right after his opponent. A good scientific or counter-wrestler who studies tapes of Mankind's matches could detect a trend and catch him early.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE:

Fellow brawlers, because that's all Mankind knows how to do. His idea of counterwrestling is to throw a punch or kick his opponent in the midsection. Mankind especially loves falls-count-anywhere and anything-goes matches in which he doesn't have to bother controlling the demons inside his head.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE:

Big Van Vader, the one brawler he couldn't conquer. A Vader power bomb nearly ended Mankind's career back in 1993. Mankind still hasn't gotten revenge. More generally, Mankind is at a loss against scientific wrestlers and aerial artists, plus anyone who can confine him to the ring.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO:

The power bomb. One more power bomb and Mankind's career—perhaps his life—could be over. Doctors warned Mankind that he already sustained too much damage to his head. Mankind's response: "Who needs a brain?"

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS:

A power move.

Some strength. Mankind is one of the most poorly conditioned brawlers we've ever seen. For a man who likes to punish opponents, he sure isn't very strong.

WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS:

Mandible clawhold. WWF opponents claim the move, in which Mankind jams his two fingers into an opponent's throat, isn't legal because it's a variation of a chokehold.

OUR COMMENTS:

Publisher Stu Saks: "No wrestler has gotten further on pure guts and determination than Mankind. He has incredible drive. It also helps that he has no mind."

Senior Editor Bill Apter:

"The knock against Mankind is that he has never won a major singles title, although he briefly held the WCW World tag team title with Kevin Sullivan. The truth is that Mankind doesn't really care. He's not in it for the belts. He's in it for the mayhem."

Senior Writer Eddie Ellner:

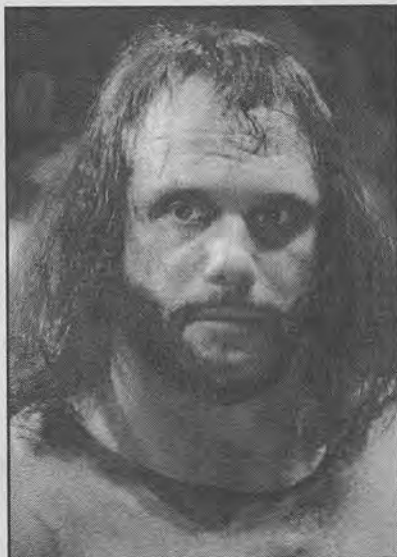
"In the great tradition of Bruiser Brody and Stan Hansen, Mankind doesn't mess around with working out in the gym or fashionable conditioning techniques. He just gets into the ring and wrestles, which is the way it's supposed to be."

Mankind



SCOUTING REPORT:

RANDY SAVAGE



MONTHLY RATINGS FOR 1996: No. 8 WCW, No. 7 overall (January); No. 9 WCW, No. 10 overall (February); No. 4 WCW, No. 4 overall (March); No. 4 WCW, No. 4 overall (April); No. 4 WCW, No. 4 overall (May); No. 3 WCW, No. 4 overall (June); No. 7 WCW, No. 13 overall (July); No. 7 WCW (August); No. 5 WCW (September); No. 7 WCW (October); No. 6 WCW (November); No. 8 WCW, No. 12 overall (December)

RECORD IN PAY-PER-VIEWS: Singles: 12-8; tag teams: 10-2-1

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Earlier in his career, the "Macho Man" had tremendous stamina and was hard to beat in long matches. Now, however, he seems to do his best work in the middle portions of matches after he has had time to size up his opponent.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: The early going. Large wrestlers have fared well against Savage by trying to overpower the undersized "Macho Man" in the early going.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE: Reckless aerial artists and past-their-prime scientific wrestlers who aren't capable of taking advantage of Savage's impatient nature. He has also fared fairly well against big wrestlers with limited repertoires—men such as Hulk Hogan.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE: Anybody who is accompanied to the ring by Elizabeth, his former wife and manager. Patient wrestlers who don't make many mistakes and trick Savage into overreacting fare particularly well. Counter-wrestlers can frustrate Savage. He's not good at changing his game plan in the middle of a match.

HOLD HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: The figure-four leglock or any other muscle-stretching move that puts pressure on Savage's thighs and lower back. He has suffered numerous injuries during his long career and sustained high-impact blasts to his back.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: A finishing move other than the flying

axhandle, which opponents know is coming. Savage needs some kind of ground finisher to throw opponents off-balance.

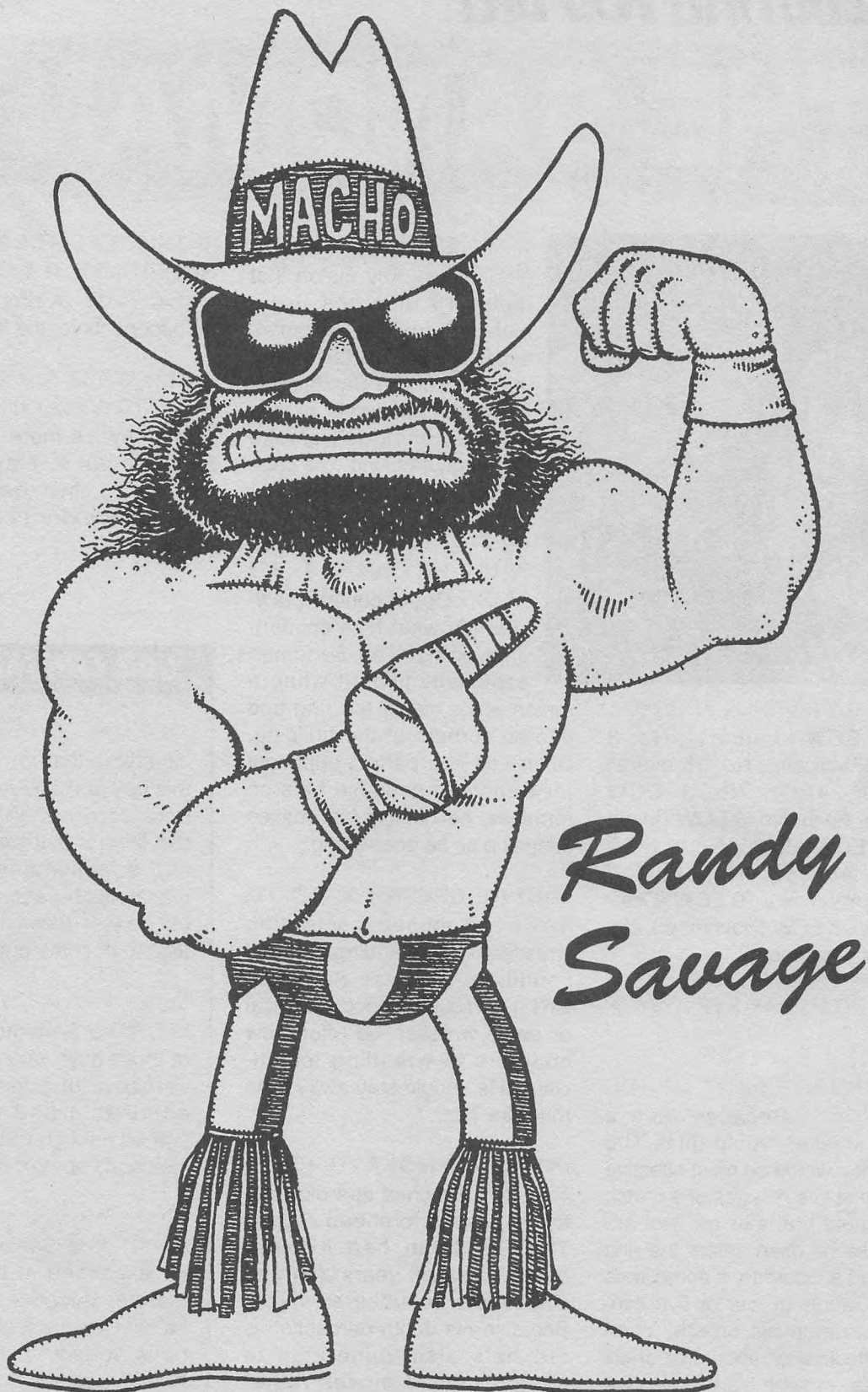
WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: Flying axhandle. It is still effective. You could count on one hand the number of wrestlers who have recovered from Savage's ax-handle and went on to win.

OUR COMMENTS:

Publisher Stu Saks: "Savage is capable of winning the WCW World title again if he'd focus on just that, but right now he's clearly too distracted by Elizabeth and all that's going on around him."

Senior Writer Eddie Ellner: "I've always admired Savage and the way he goes about his business, but I'm afraid he's become too emotional. Elizabeth's mere presence in WCW, much less on the arm of Ric Flair, is driving him crazy."

Contributing Editor Liz Hunter: "Savage is a much smarter wrestler now than he was a few years ago. Unlike a lot of people, I believe he wrestles his best matches when he is angry."



SCOUTING REPORT:

THE SANDMAN



MONTHLY RATINGS FOR 1996:

No. 1 ECW (January); No. 3 ECW (February); No. 15 overall (March, April), No. 1 ECW (March, April); No. 3 ECW (May); No. 2 ECW (June); No. 5 ECW (July, August); No. 8 ECW (September); No. 10 ECW (October); No. 8 ECW (November), No. 4 ECW (December).

RECORD IN PAY-PER-VIEWS:

None

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES:

Because he's a chain smoker, you'd think The Sandman would be most effective in the first five minutes of a match and would tire later on. Not so. Because he often enters the ring smoking a cigarette, it sometimes takes Sandman four or five minutes to catch his breath. Then he's effective for about five or six minutes—maybe it's the nicotine rush—before his small lung capacity causes him problems.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES:

Any match that lasts 10 minutes is a marathon for The Sandman, especially against fast-paced opponents. The Sandman is the perfect example of why athletes shouldn't smoke (although smoking was once fashionable among elite athletes).

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE:

Out-of-control brawlers. It's what he's comfortable doing. The Sandman especially likes it when a

match spills out of the ring and into all corners of the building. Brian Lee is a perfect opponent for Sandman because he's so formless; he usually just makes things up as he goes along.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE:

Focused, scientific wrestlers in outstanding physical condition. Because Sandman isn't a particularly good technical or aerial wrestler, he offers few counters to wrestling technicians. He should stay away from men like Taz.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO:

Punches and blows to the eyes and forehead region. The Sandman had his eye burned several years ago and still suffers from blurred vision. Because his depth perception is off, he's also vulnerable to straight-ahead moves rather than those that come from the side.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: A dropkick to set up opponents for the legdrop.

WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS:

Legdrop. Some say it's more lethal than Hulk Hogan's. Maybe that's because he often uses a chair to add some extra punch to the move.

OUR COMMENTS:

Publisher Stu Saks: "It's incredible that an athlete in this day and age takes such poor care of himself. The sad thing is that with his size and determination, Sandman could be a top wrestler, but he just doesn't put in the time to become one."

Editor-in-Chief Dave Lenker: "The Sandman is one of those guys who's too concerned with punishing his opponents and not concerned enough with winning. He needs some direction."

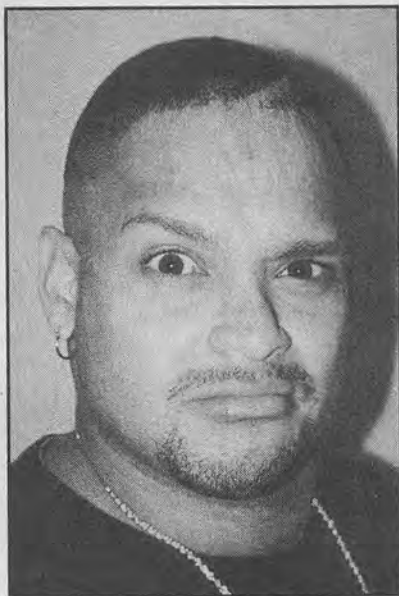
Photo Editor Jason Ross Lavin: "The Sandman can't be assessed in the usual manner because although he isn't the perfect wrestler, he is perfect for ECW and its wild matches."

The Sandman



SCOUTING REPORT:

SAVIO VEGA



MONTHLY RATINGS FOR 1996: No. 12 WWF (January); No. 13 WWF (February); No. 10 WWF (March, April); No. 15 WWF (May); No. 12 WWF (June, July); No. 8 WWF (August); No. 9 WWF (September); No. 12 WWF (October); No. 9 WWF (November); No. 11 WWF (December)

RECORD IN PAY-PER-VIEWS: Singles: 5-3; tag teams: 1-1

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Vega's a quick starter who likes to bound into the ring and come out gunning. Opponents who aren't ready for Vega's early assault invariably find themselves in trouble. Sometimes five or six minutes go by before they can fight back.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Vega hasn't wres-

tled many marathons, so it's impossible to rate his performance in 20-plus-minute matches. He has run into trouble in the 10-to-15-minute range against talented veterans such as Goldust and Steve Austin and has yet to prove he can sustain his attack over the long haul.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE: Average-sized brawlers with slow feet. With his spectacular array of savate kicks and martial arts moves, Vega can strike quickly and throw all but the fastest opponents off-balance. Vega likes to throw everything he can at his opponents in a hurry and see how they deal with it.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE: Vega has had a difficult time against big men and talented counterwrestlers. He lost to Mabel in the finals of the 1995 King of the Ring tournament and has proven vulnerable against veteran Steve Austin, one of the better counterwrestlers in the world.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: Vega wouldn't mind if he never again saw Steve Austin's "Stone-Cold Stunner."

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: Any power move—a clothesline or a power bomb, for instance. Vega weakens his opponents with his karate and martial arts moves,

but he lacks a surefire way to finish them off.

WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: Savate kicks. Vega somehow manages to put the entire force of his 250-pound body behind these kicks, and they come from all different angles. Victims feel as if they've been struck by a ton of bricks.

OUR COMMENTS:

Senior Editor Bill Apter: "Vega's fast and skilled, and he really does his homework. He's very good at detecting weaknesses in his opponents."

Managing Editor Brandi Mankiewicz: "Vega may have gone about as far as he can go. I don't see him becoming one of the elite wrestlers in the sport, because he doesn't have all the tools. Sure, he's exciting to watch, but he needs to become a better defensive wrestler."

Senior Writer Dave Rosenbaum: "Savio Vega is an exciting wrestler who's going to make a lot of money in this sport, but he's not going to make a huge splash. But he has come a long way, and he could get even better."



*Savio
Vega*

SCOUTING REPORT:

JERRY LAWLER



MONTHLY RATINGS FOR 1996: No. 1 USWA, No. 14 overall (January); No. 1 USWA (February); Not rated (March-May); No. 5 USWA, No. 10 WWF (June); No. 1 USWA, No. 14 overall (July); No. 3 USWA (August); No. 2 USWA, No. 13 overall (September); No. 3 USWA, No. 15 WWF (October); No. 4 USWA (November); No. 1 USWA, No. 15 overall (December)

RECORD IN PAY-PER-VIEWS: Singles: 2-3; tag teams: 1-1

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Given that Lawler has spent 27 years in the sport, it's no surprise that he likes to get his nights over with quickly now. He's a brawler who starts fast and wants his matches to end in the first 10 minutes.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Lawler tends to

resort to trickery and illegal tactics after his matches hit the 10-minute mark. He realizes his chances of a clean victory are greatly reduced, especially against younger wrestlers.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE: Kids, rookies, and anybody else with very little experience. Lawler is one of the cagiest wrestlers in history, and he'll find a way to overcome a more talented foe. The key to beating Lawler is respecting him. Underestimate him and you'll pay.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE: Earlier in his career, Lawler could go the distance against the best wrestlers in the world. But scientific wrestlers with stamina give him a hard time, and Lawler was humbled repeatedly by Bret Hart a few years ago.

HOLD HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: The "sharpshooter" and other leglocks. Lawler's legs have endured too many injuries in his long career, and he'd rather not have to resist leg-stretching holds. They're just too painful.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: A young tag team partner. Bill Dundee is fine, but Lawler needs somebody younger. The combination of the experienced, brawling Lawler and a smart, quick scientific wrestler could be a tough combi-

nation in any federation, including the WWF.

WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: Piledriver. Still one of the most feared moves in the sport, Lawler's is never far off the mark. The point of impact is almost always the base of the neck, resulting in temporary paralysis.

OUR COMMENTS

Publisher Stu Saks: "Lawler's always been most at home in the USWA, and it's good to see he's now doing most of his wrestling there. The unfortunate part is that he's turned against the loyal fans of Memphis, but it doesn't seem to have affected his wrestling."

Editor-in-Chief Dave Lenker: "In his prime, nobody was better at pacing a match than Lawler. Now he just wants to end them as quickly as possible, so he has become a more effective tag team wrestler."

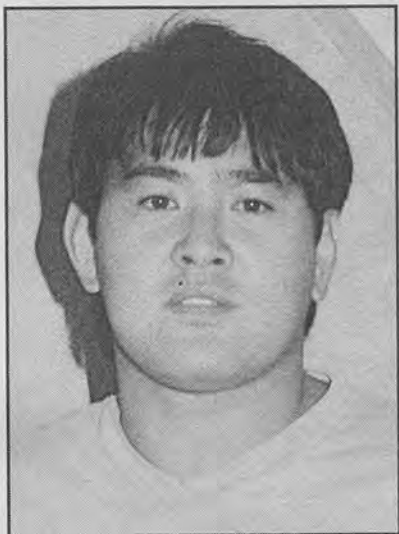
Senior Writer Dave Rosenbaum: "The unfortunate part is that many WWF fans view Lawler as a clown, rather than the great wrestler USWA fans know him to be. But at this point in Lawler's career, money's more important to him, and I can't say I blame him."



Jerry Lawler

SCOUTING REPORT:

THE GREAT MUTA



MONTHLY RATINGS FOR 1996: No. 2 International (January); No. 1 International (February); No. 10 International (March); No. 1 New Japan (April); No. 2 New Japan (May); No. 4 New Japan (June); No. 1 New Japan (July, August); No. 4 New Japan (September); No. 3 New Japan (October); No. 2 New Japan (November); No. 8 New Japan (December)

RECORD IN PAY-PER-VIEWS: Singles: 1-4

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: The Great Muta loves to come out flying (literally), but that makes him vulnerable. He's most effective when he controls himself at the outset and allows himself to get into a groove, then uses his wrestling skill to set up his aerial maneuvers.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: The first four min-

utes. Five years ago in the "Iron Man" competition at Starrcade, Ric Flair and Sting each scored shocking victories over Muta in the opening five minutes. Muta is absolutely too reckless and intent on putting on a show for the fans.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE: Other aerial wrestlers who bring out the best in him. Like we said, Muta is, at times, more concerned with putting on a high-flying show than winning his matches, and doesn't mind picking up points for style.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE: Big, slow-moving wrestlers really frustrate Muta because they don't allow him to get into a rhythm. Muta has also had difficulty against intelligent counterwrestlers who have detected subtle weaknesses in his aerial moves.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: Flying bodypresses. Probably the best way to beat Muta is to lure him into a high-risk aerial maneuver, then catch him in mid-air and slam him or avoid it altogether.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: A few power moves to weaken opponents before he goes to the air. Muta's awfully talented, but he has a hard time taking advantage of his aerial skills when

he's in the ring with men who are a lot more powerful than he is.

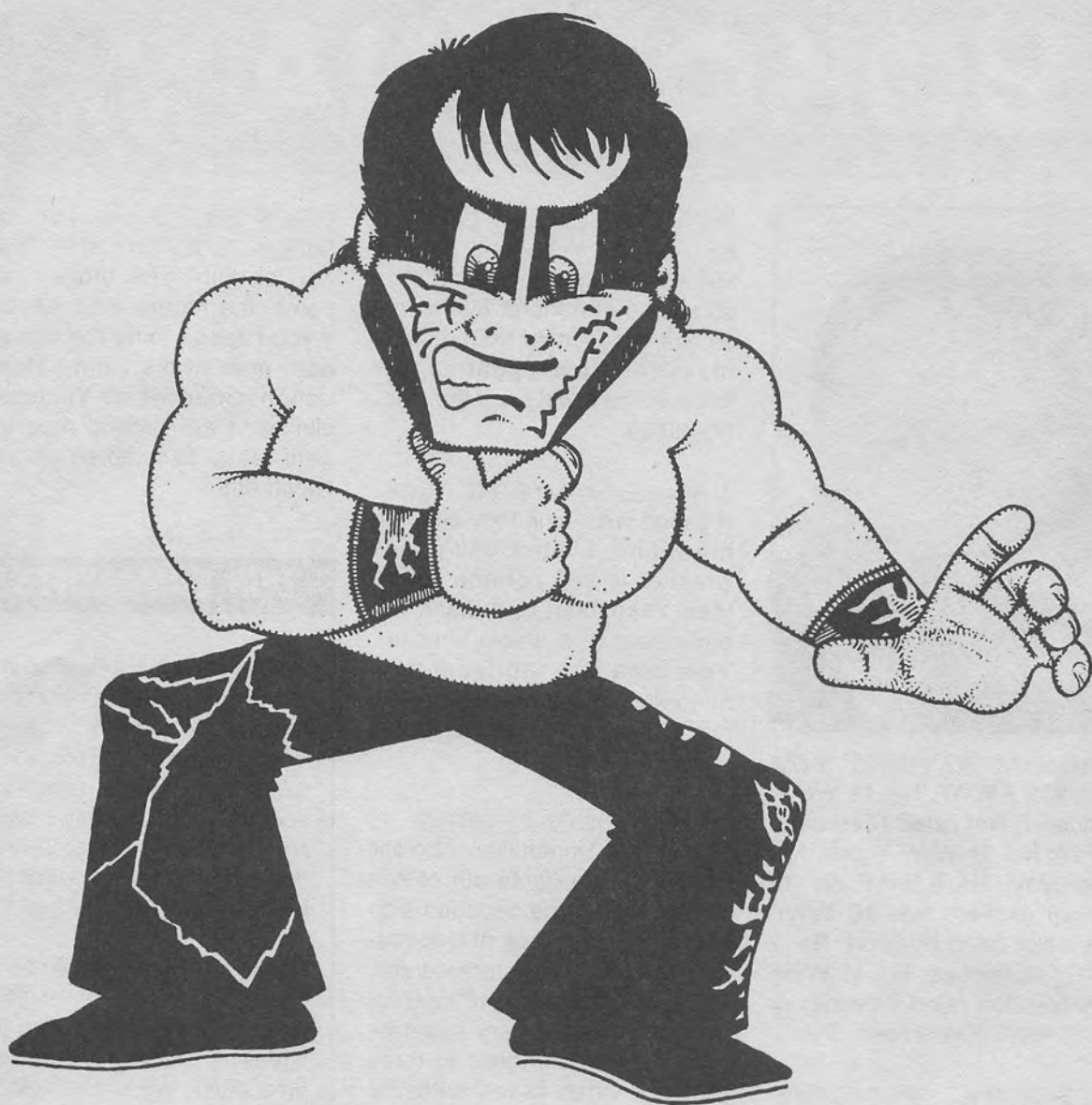
WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: Moon-sault. Muta is the master of his spectacular maneuver.

OUR COMMENTS:

Editor-in-Chief Dave Lenker: "I really think a lot of the fans miss Muta. There are plenty of aerial superstars in the U.S., but only a few are as spectacular as Muta."

Senior Editor Bill Apter: "Muta is wrestling in New Japan now, which is too bad for WCW fans. Muta made daredevil aerial wrestling fashionable in the United States and made the fans pine for wrestlers such as Sabu and Rey Misterio Jr."

Senior Writer Dave Rosenbaum: "Muta's spectacular, but he's also easily frustrated when things aren't going his way. He has one speed, fast, and knows only one way to wrestle—in the air. No wonder he stayed so far away from WCW during the time the federation banned top-rope maneuvers."



The Great Muta

SCOUTING REPORT:

YOKOZUNA



MONTHLY RATINGS FOR 1996: No. 7 WWF, No. 11 overall (January); Not rated (February, March); No. 11 WWF (April); Not rated (May); No. 6 WWF, No. 13 overall (June); No. 10 WWF (July); Not rated (August); No. 7 WWF (September); No. 11 WWF (October); Not rated (November); No. 10 WWF (December)

RECORD IN PAY-PER-VIEWS: Singles: 6-3-1; tag teams: 3-4

STRONGEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: At 6'4", 556 pounds, Yokozuna, you'd think would fit the stereotype of the wrestler who lasts about five or six minutes and then, exhausted, starts to struggle big-time. Not true. Although by no means a marathon man, Yokozuna has scored many of his most important victories between 13 to 17 minutes into matches. Pacing is key.

WEAKEST PART OF HIS MATCHES: Yokozuna doesn't like very long nights, so it's no surprise that none of his matches has gone longer than 30 minutes. Yokozuna might as well throw in the towel once the clock hits 20:00.

WHO HE WANTS TO FACE: Big men who think they can outbrawl him. Even a 350-pound wrestler is 206 pounds lighter than Yokozuna, and that's the equivalent of a whole wrestler. Yokozuna is a tag team unto himself. You cannot outbrawl him and expect to get out of the ring with a win.

WHO HE DOESN'T WANT TO FACE: The Undertaker, who still scares the daylights out of him when he's on the opposite side of the ring. One look at that casket and Yokozuna is scared stiff. Yokozuna has a fear of mystical wrestlers. He's a very superstitious man who shrinks to three feet tall when faced with the unknown.

MOVE HE'S MOST VULNERABLE TO: Yokozuna is so big that it's nearly impossible to knock him off his feet, but it's worth trying because then he has a hard time getting back up. A series of running clotheslines is occasionally effective.

IF THIS WAS ADDED TO HIS REPERTOIRE, IT WOULD BE A HUGE PLUS: A sleeperhold would work well for him.

WHEN WRESTLING HIM, BE SURE TO AVOID HIS: "Banzai" splash! The bigger they come, the harder they fall, and if you happen to be the unfortunate man who's lying virtually unconscious when Yokozuna climbs to the second rope and gets ready to jump-sit on you, watch out!

OUR COMMENTS

Senior Writer Eddie Ellner:

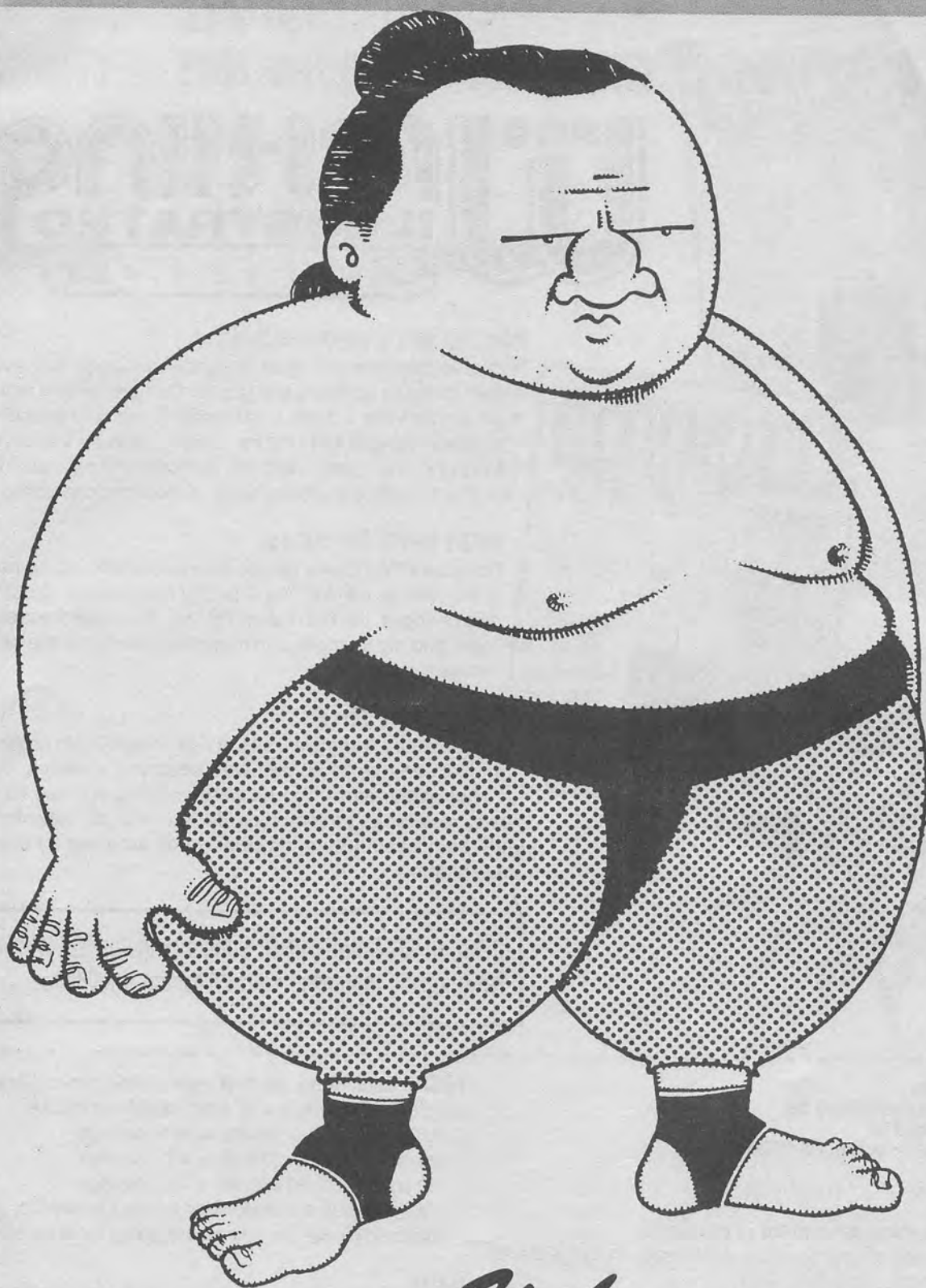
"How far would Yokozuna have gone without Mr. Fuji and his salt? Probably nowhere. Yokozuna has scored some unlikely victories and won two WWF titles, but I think he reached his peak a few years ago."

Senior Editor Bill Apter:

"Yokozuna is one of the most successful big men in wrestling history. He's a two-time WWF World champion, and although one of those reigns didn't even last a night, the other went on for nine months."

Publisher Stu Saks:

"Opponents have figured out how to beat Yokozuna. Now I think he'd be more effective in tag teams, where he can go into the ring for a few minutes, do his thing, and then get right out."



Yokozuna

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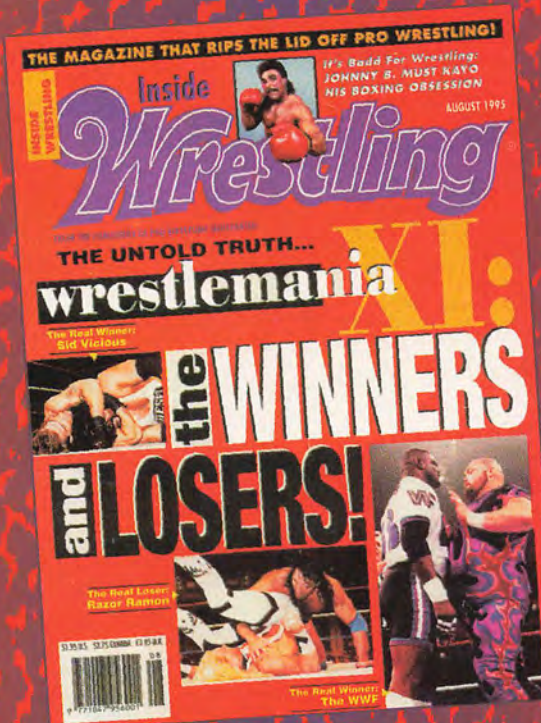
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